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BRIGHT
MORNING



1



BRIGHT MORNING.

VOL. I.

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BRIGHT MORNING.

MARIA W. GALT

Author of "The Story of the Little Girl"

IN THREE VOLUMES

VOLUME I

LONDON:

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63



BRIGHT MORNING.

BY
MARIA M. GRANT,
AUTHOR OF "ARTISTE."

"Schön ist des Lebens Morgen-Thür."

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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BRIGHT MORNING.

INTRODUCTION.

THE HAMILTONS AND THE LINDSAYS.
A FAMILY CHRONICLE.

THE Hamiltons of the Craig, and the Lindsays of Hawthorne had been neighbours near the slopes of Corstorphine since—as some people said—the Flood.

If Walter Scott had been writing their histories, in a retrospect view from his time, he would have had to chronicle a long series of close intercourse, sometimes friendly, often the reverse—to chronicle marriages and intermarriages, loves, jealousies, and feuds—raids made in company upon the strongholds of the neighbourhood, and raids made often upon each other.

He might have painted their family histories as a common picture of Scotland and the Scotch of those bygone days.

But times are changed.

Railways, with their dissipating influences, have penetrated the fastnesses of the North. There is a station at the very gates of the Craig, and a tunnel runs through the hills beyond the old grey house of Hawthorne.

The two last Hamiltons of the Craig had been educated at Eton, had served in the Fusilier Guards, and had lost all external traces of their nationality.

The late Hamilton had come seldom to the Craig. He had married young, and had married an Englishwoman, Lady Marian Peel, daughter of the Earl of Clarenleigh.

During her husband's lifetime, Lady Marian could never reconcile herself to his Scottish home. They had lived among her people, chiefly in London, sometimes abroad. They had a large family of daughters and one son.

They had got through a great deal of

money ; so much, indeed, that it was considered by trustees and guardians a fortunate thing that Forbes Hamilton died while his son was still a child, with a long minority before him, to mend up the tottering fortunes of the house.

A curious change came over Lady Marian's views at her husband's death. She awoke suddenly to what she termed a "sense of her position ;" by which she meant, that now she was entire mistress of herself, the *dignity* of her position would be better upheld by living on the old family estate, as Lady Marian Hamilton of the Craig, than by wandering about in the reflected glory of the house of Clarenleigh ; especially now that her father was no more, and her brother reigned in his stead.

She had liked the life during her father's time ; she had been the ruling influence, virtually the mistress at Clarenleigh Hall ; but she could not rule her brother, and she saw that the dictates of wisdom and forethought pointed to the removal of her dynasty to the Craig.

It was extremely inconvenient to the trustees. They wished to let the place; rents were running high in Scotland, and a good yearly addition to the accumulating income, was greatly for the future welfare of the young laird.

But Lady Marian had a quibble of legal right upon her side, and she took advantage of it, facing the just wrath of the whole phalanx of trustees.

She came down with a squadron of English servants, established herself at the Craig, and gave her mind to the management of everybody in general, of her daughters in particular, and to the education of her son and heir.

So much for the Hamiltons.

The later history of the Lindsays of Hawthorne had been somewhat different. Two generations ago, it was realised that the family fortunes were at a low ebb.

There had been no unwarrantable extravagance on their part, but existence as Scotch lairds had become more expensive, and the Lindsays had grown no richer.

So there broke out among them the two manias that infected Scotland about that time. One of them has been transitory; the other has become the kernel of Scottish energy. The first was the mania for West Indian property; the second is the passion for scattering to the antipodes of the earth.

The Lindsay of the day bought West Indian estates, full of hope that in time they would bring gold to the coffers of Hawthorne; sorely, however, against the advice of his sage sister, Miss Helen Lindsay, who lived with him, counselled him, and scolded him, but in vain,—Lindsay was determined. He sold as much of the Hawthorne lands as the entail would allow him, and he bought plantations abroad.

He had a rough time of it in consequence with Miss Helen; until at length, in hopes of quieting her shrewd but most irascible mind, he separated from the bulk of the property an old jointure residence, and this, with its revenue, he settled upon Helen Lindsay as the maiden daughter of the house.

She took herself off to it, quarrelled openly with her brother, and set herself up in the full dignity of her disapproval as the "Leddy of Sea Grange."

"You should think of your family, James," she had uttered austerely as she left his house; for James Lindsay was married, and had a daughter and two sons.

"I do think of them," he had answered, "and it is for their sakes that I do this deed."

"You are committing a folly," said Miss Helen; and ere she had been long at Sea Grange, the sequel proved her words too true.

Slave Emancipation arrived, and West Indian properties went down with a crash.

Lindsay of Hawthorne was almost ruined. The chagrin and humiliation seemed to pierce his heart; he could not rise under it, and amid the wreck of his fortunes he died.

What now remained of Hawthorne was the property of William, his eldest son, a young man of simple tastes, of indolent

nature, and rather retiring habits. He determined to live on at Hawthorne, economize his resources, and make the best of it. He had no spirit of enterprise.

But, his younger brother, John Archibald Lindsay, was of different blood. He had been the boyish friend, many years before, of wild Forbes Hamilton of the Craig. They had scoured the country together, carried their guns over every hill and moorland within reach, fished the deep pools of the Craig river, and lived out their free, boyish life until Forbes Hamilton was sent to have an English education in the South. He had gone away, out into the world, and had never permanently returned ; and John Lindsay had remained quietly behind him, but with restless passion growing strong.

Over and over again, John told his sister Isabel, that he chafed under the restriction of home, and was burning with the wish to be off—he cared little where. He thirsted for excitement and novelty ; he pined to travel over the great wide world that lay somewhere beyond the Forth.

Isabel Lindsay shared this passion. She was devoted to her younger brother, with whom her eager, excitable nature found a sympathy, lacking in William's phlegmatic frame. The two schemed, and dreamt, and longed together; and when their father died, and it was judged advisable that John should go out and see if anything could be done with these West Indian properties, Isabel determined to go with him. Of course, Miss Helen was aghast; but Isabel was resolute, and she and John accordingly set sail.

There was not much to be made of the sugar-canes, but enough for John. He stayed there, and before long he had found a bright-eyed girl, the daughter of an English planter, whom he made his wife.

This did not increase their fortunes, but it made the Scottish West Indian settlement a very happy home. Soon a son was born to them, whom they christened James, in an orthodox Scottish fashion, after his paternal grandfather; and John Lindsay added Forbes to the boy's name, in memory of his early

friendship, and those sunny days at the Craig and at Hawthorne, long ago.

Then a daughter came, and they called her Marjory. John said he liked the name; it had a pleasant, homely sound.

They were very happy.

Isabel lived with them, until at length *her* destiny came. It arrived in a British transport troop-ship. There was a change of regiments, and out from England came her Majesty's —st Foot, and with them Captain Greville O'Neil, who turned out to be Isabel's fate.

He was a handsome man—one of those expensive individuals that abound in the world, doubtless highly ornamental, but certainly very useless to themselves, or their friends.

Isabel fell in love with him, and he—took the trouble to marry her. The regiment was moved again from the West Indies, and with it she left her brother's home.

About this time, John Lindsay's health began to fail, and there came over him that deep longing for home; there rose up within

him that passionate yearning, that breaks over the Scottish heart, to see his country again; to pass across the threshold of his old home; to tread the green walks in the garden at Hawthorne; to watch the evening shadows fall over the Corstorphine, and the sunlight glisten on the Forth.

It is irresistible, that strong desire. It is the voice of failing energy, the fervent echo of a warning that the wandering and working day is over, and that a change is nigh to come. And as it has driven many a Scot besides him, it drove John Lindsay home.

He brought his family to Edinburgh, and he went to Hawthorne, to smooth the way for their advent there. And then he tasted some little bitterness; for during the years of his absence, the home was changed.

William Lindsay had married, and his house was crowded with a community of new belongings, all strangers to John. He had several children, and his wife had many relatives. She had known vaguely that her husband had a brother, and he had informed her in a casual way that this brother was

coming home. But William was a taciturn man, indolent, and devoid of warmth in all his affections and his expressions thereof, and no great interest had been aroused in his wife's mind by the approaching arrival of his brother.

The John Lindsays came back to find the old home filled up with new inhabitants; and John returned to Edinburgh, a saddened man. It would have been dreary enough for them but for Sea Grange, and the vociferous welcome of Aunt Helen. She was still ruling there, and was fresh, fervent, and enthusiastic as ever in all her tempers and affections.

She hated the new *régime* at Hawthorne, and received her nephew John with delight. She took them all with her to Sea Grange until they made their plans, and then she assisted them to settle down in Edinburgh.

She extracted from John full details of his position; found that he had a sufficient background of savings to make provision for his family for the years to come; and then

she demanded of him an account of the married prospects of his sister Isabel.

Alas! they were not satisfactory. Isabel's husband he could only describe as a selfish, extravagant man. Isabel was fond of him, he was not unkind to her, and John believed she was happy. He could also report that she had several children. What their family lived upon, he really did not know—apparently upon nothing.

Aunt Helen was furious! She departed in a terrible rage, and it was four days before she again presented herself at the house in South Castle Street. Then John saw her coming, and he felt that he ignominiously trembled. He watched, from the bow-window of his drawing-room, her tall, straight figure, as she came up the street, dressed in black satin, made narrow and short, with a soft cashmere shawl, of a grey pattern upon a white ground, folded decorously across her shoulders; a high, black poke bonnet, and a cloud of tulle fluffiness surrounding her austere face.

Such was Aunt Helen; and John saw that

her umbrella was held with an unusual aspect of grim severity as she approached the house.

She came in upon him.

"John," she said, before she was seated, "I have come to give you my mind. Do not speak ; do not interrupt me—it will do me good, John ; it will do me good."

John proffered a chair, sat down himself, and expressed his willingness to be the victim of whatever vituperations his aunt found thus advisable for her own well-being and behoof.

"Yes, John, it will do me good. I always said to your father, James Lindsay of Hawthorne, that this West-Indian property was a folly. *Was* I right or wrong? Do not interrupt me, John ! I always said that Isabel's accompanying you, instead of remaining at home with me, was a folly. Was I right or wrong? And finally, John, I always say, that marriage without means is the height of folly ; and now, I do say, that this marriage of Isabel's was a piece of iniquitous madness, such as I cannot con-

ceive a man in his senses, like you, ever consenting to for one single moment."

"I was not asked to consent," said John meekly. "Isabel was a Lindsay, and would follow no way but her own. It is a habit the women have among us, I think, Aunt Helen," he added a little mischievously.

"Ah well! it was a terrible business, but now it is done, John. Now you cannot help it, and now I cannot help it, let me say what I may. Now these children *are* born, they must be provided for."

"It would be very desirable," replied John.

"It must be done!" exclaimed Aunt Helen emphatically. "Now *you* do not want money, do you, John?"

"Well, no, thank God," said John, "my need will not bear comparison with poor Isabel's. I have a competency to leave to Mary, and my boy and girl."

"So you have, and credit to you for it. It is good when a Lindsay can prop the roof of his own house; but there is Isabel, poor child, with that tribe of babies and that booby (as

it is evident to me he is) of a husband, somebody must do something for them, if only to keep the blood of Lindsay off the parish. Poor unfortunate child! Here, you read this for me, John;" and Aunt Helen produced a long paper from her reticule, unfolded it, and handed it to her nephew, with a watery twinkle in her stern eyes, as she vituperated Isabel, that was much at variance with her acid tongue.

"You will see I have spoken my mind, John." And he found she had.

She had put upon record the "follies," as she said, of two generations of Lindsays. She had chronicled her views upon impecunious matrimony, and on the conduct of her niece Isabel in particular; and she had wound up this lengthy composition with the formal will and testament of Sea Grange with all her property and moneys, strictly tied up in behoof of Isabel O'Neil and her children, reserving, however, to herself the right of future change.

John Lindsay was a just man, and for a moment thought this hard on his own two;

but he said nothing, for he considered again, that his were at least secure from want, and that for Isabel there was positively nothing.

It took a great weight off his heart, to see this new prospect opening for his bright, fair sister and her little ones.

"Now, you sit down and write to Isabel," resumed Miss Helen. "Just tell her what I have done; and when you have finished all that part, you may write her my sound advice. That she give up philandering after a regiment, and come home, bag and baggage, children, that booby husband and all, and settle down decently and respectably with me at Sea Grange. There is that rambling old house, John," she went on apologetically, as she saw her nephew's astonishment, "what better can I do with it, I ask you, than fill it with Isabel's bairns?"

John caught her hand in his and wrung it eagerly.

"You have a heart of gold, Aunt Helen, and I thank you in Isabel's name, and in my own."

“Just you write, then, and let us have no more words about it.” And Aunt Helen went home.

He wrote, but the —st were in Southern Australia, and they had to wait some time for a reply.

Meanwhile, John busied himself in settling his family in their Edinburgh home. It pleased him to think they should be there. There were many old friends in the neighbourhood who would be kind to them, and if their relations at Hawthorne were cold, there was always the solid background of Aunt Helen, her vehement affection, and her constant, hearty welcome at Sea Grange.

It pleased John to think that Margie would grow up a Scotchwoman, and that James would follow his own footsteps at school.

The new High School had been erected since his younger days, on the slopes of the Calton Hill, with its beautiful view to the Pentlands; and, before they had been many weeks in Edinburgh, Jim had begun his school-days, trudging along Prince’s

Street morning after morning, with his satchel of books, and a penny in his pocket for his mid-day roll.

And there, there soon occurred a circumstance that coloured many changes in his after life.

The third morning of his attendance, as he trudged to the gate, Jim saw a groom in livery, mounted on a tall bay horse, and leading up and down by its long rein a Liliputian pony.

Jim wondered, and then went into the courtyard of the school.

The first sight that met him was a ring of boys in a state of delighted excitement, apparently watching a fight. Jim pushed in among them, and there he beheld a small thing with long yellow curls, punching vigorously at a broad-fisted boy some half a foot taller than himself.

The little fellow was showing plenty of pluck, and was immensely excited. He fought with some science too, but the bigger boy was sullen and determined, and presently came a straight blow on the child's

face, and a stream of blood flowed down, scarlet as his stockings.

Jim rushed forward indignant, "Shame, Seton," he cried, "fighting a baby like that!"

"He must be pitched into," said the boy apologetically, "he is the most uppish little rascal in the school. Some fellow must teach him his place."

Meanwhile the child scampered off to the pump, and Jim followed him.

"Are you hurt badly?" he asked, looking with no little admiration, as the tiny boy plunged his yellow curls into the icy water. The child looked up at him with a pair of blue eyes sparkling below the mane of dripping hair.

"No, not a bit!" he exclaimed.

"Well done," said Jim. "You're a capital fellow. How old are you?"

"I am seven," said the boy, "but I come to school, and I can fight."

"That you can; and what is your name?"

"Godfrey Forbes Hamilton," he replied, "and the Craig is my home."

When Jim related the story to his father in the evening, John Lindsay brightened with eager interest.

"It is a curious circumstance," he exclaimed. "Tell him, if you see him to-morrow, that you are called Forbes also, and after his father, who was your father's earliest friend."

To-morrow came, and Jim told him, and Godfrey carried the tale home in his turn. Lady Marian knew all about the old friendship; she came to visit Mr. Lindsay, and the next Saturday Jim was invited to spend in a day's fishing on the river Craig.

Jim went that Saturday, and many Saturdays besides. For the first two years he was at school, the old friendship of their fathers was renewed with stronger fervour than ever between Goff Hamilton and him. These were very happy years, till,—Lord Clarenleigh came down upon them.

He discovered the sort of training that Goff was likely to receive at the Craig. He found that the boy was supposed to ride into Edinburgh every day to school; but he

never went in bad weather ; he never went if his pony was tired, or if he had the smallest excuse on his own account ; and Lord Clarenleigh woke up his mother to realise that this would not do.

He packed off Godfrey to Eton, and thus Jim was bereft of him, as his father had been long years before of the friendship of Forbes.

Lady Marian lived on at home, however, Goff returned for all his holidays, and they were generally spent in hunting up Jim Lindsay from his work in Edinburgh, and in beguiling him out to the Craig.

* * * * *

In due time the answer from Australia to Aunt Helen's message had arrived ; but the letter that brought the answer had a deep black border, and was not written by Isabel.

Aunt Helen's message had come just too late—Isabel O'Neil had already "gone home." She had given birth to her fourth little boy, and had died just a day before John's letter reached their Australian station.

Her husband wrote that Aunt Helen's message and invitation had come very opportunely. He was tired of soldiering, and he gladly consented to ship his troop of little children, bring them to Aunt Helen, and deposit them at Sea Grange in her care.

* * * * *

One of Jim Lindsay's last memories of his father was driving with him on a winter afternoon to Granton; of seeing a large ship come in; of boarding it; of encountering a tall, foreign-looking man, a group of sun-tanned children, one little girl in their midst. Jim remembered lifting her from the deck. He could always recall the soft pressure of the little arms round his neck as he carried her across the plank on to the pier, and brought her to his father; and John Lindsay clasped Isabel's child to his breast.

They all drove to Sea Grange, were soon settled there, and a few months afterwards John Lindsay died.

One after another—born, loved, married, and died.

Such is a "Family Chronicle."

CHAPTER I.

MODERN ATHENS.

IT was sunset in the "Queen of Cities." The green slopes of Arthur's Seat stood out against the hazy, crimson sky, and the Salisbury Craigs, bold and defiant, reared their rugged outlines in dewy mists that curled up from the meadow lands below.

The shadows of the evening fell upon the old quadrant of Holyrood, and the sunset cast broad, golden rays through the cloisters of the ruined chapel.

Passing the Old Tolbooth, and winding round the side of the Calton Hill, there is a broad, dusty road, by which, at a sudden turning, the busy hum of the great city is left behind, and a view bursts upon the eye, green, rural, restful, stretching away to the Pentland Hills.

Holyrood and Craigmillar, rich in romance and teeming with associations, stand out landmarks in the prospect, arresting the gaze, and firing up the soul with historic enthusiasm. A parapet runs along the side of the footway, and just below the High School, on this summer evening, stood James Lindsay, now a lad of twenty-two, his folded arms resting upon the low wall, and his eyes fixed upon the prospect beneath him.

He had come to bid farewell to this scene of his boyhood. School-days were over for him ; he had come alone, to spend an hour in reading back upon the history of his life.

He wished to revise what he had done, and what he had meant to do ; to contemplate the future that lay still unconquered, to trace results to their inspiring origins in the past.

And he felt that this scene had been the page most constantly studied, the source most productive, amid the varied influences that had tutored his life. He had had a happy, earnest boyhood ; years had rolled

evenly on in the little house in Castle Street as Jim trod the beaten way to university from school. His existence would have been monotonous, but for that wealth of beauty for mind and imagination that flowed from his studies, and emanated from the town and from the country around him.

Plodding to and fro, passing through year after year, when the change of a professor or a promotion in his class seemed the only external variations of his existence, Jim had lived through strange periods of transition, when powerful vibrations of thought and imagination had alternately swayed his being. First, years when a dreamy enjoyment of historic reverie, combined with "hockie," cricket, and other schoolboy sports, had fed his spirit as he studied, and re-peopled old Edinburgh again.

Years when he had delighted to follow the shadow of the Scottish Mary through the grim chambers of Holyrood, to search out the traces of Rizzio; when he had loved to lean on the parapet, and gaze down upon the grey walls, and conjure up anew the

dark night when the squadrons of Bothwell's troopers filled the old yard, and the lurid glare from the burning towers of Craigmillar lit up the sky; and he would turn it all into school-boy doggrel, and be very happy over it—he, and Marjory, and Robert Deane, who coached him nightly for his school work through all these years.

That time had passed away, and one of feverish ambition had followed it. When the glow of triumph, as they fastened the Dux medal upon his breast, seemed a foretaste of mighty triumphs to come, and a faint echo of a world-wide applause, he thought his life's work might win. Ambition became his idol for some youthful years.

He had purpose sufficient to pursue; he dreamt wildly and studied hard; he had visions of multitudes held breathless by the impassioned eloquence of his words. Sometimes in one way, sometimes in another, he saw himself great, applauded, and laurel-crowned; and he worked eagerly towards this.

Then suddenly he awoke from his dream.

Romance took wings and floated sorrowingly away. Ambition, vague and impracticable, sank out of view, and there stood, opened up before him, a pathway of duty, simple, stern, self-denying, and unadorned, which he recognised as his destiny to follow.

Somebody offered him a clerkship in a foreign tea-house, and he realised that it behoved him to take it. Science was fascinating, but it was not remunerative ; law was grand, and promised harvests in the course of years ; but Jim had no time for patience, and no money to keep things going meanwhile. He could not be a burden longer upon his mother ; there was little enough at home for Margie and her ; so he stifled ambition, slew romance, mastered double-entry, and accepted trade.

The resolution had cost him,—and it had hardened him to himself. Since he had formed it, an expression of stern purpose had crept over his face. It rested on his firm mouth, and spoke in the steady gaze of his dark grey eyes.

The cast of his features was Celtic,

and so was his colouring. A fair healthy skin, with a faint ruddy tint on his cheeks, auburn brown hair, showing in a ring of crisp curls below his cap. He was a thorough Scotchman, and he knew it. He felt it now in the mingled sentiments that deepened the flush on his cheek, and fired his eyes as he looked towards the Pentlands. Keen and poignant regret at leaving his country and his home; delight, eager and impatient, at starting in the enterprise of life. He had been leaning for a long time on the parapet—he knew it would be many a year before he looked on that prospect again. By that time to-morrow, he would be rushing through the country southward, several hundred miles away. He saw the view from the Calton for the last time—he took a long and lingering farewell.

Meanwhile, in the bow-windows of the drawing-room in South Castle Street, Margie Lindsay was watching for her brother. It was a small, pretty room, made cheerful with bright chintzes, by stands of flowers in full summer bloom, by the cage full of

Margie's canaries, that swung in the window above her head. It looked upon the street, but from the corner where she sat, the nestling banks of verdure on the Castle Rock came in view, fresh and summery amid the dusty turmoil of the town.

Margie was busy putting last stitches here and there into articles of outfit for Jim. The rays of the summer sunset came slanting up the street, and fell upon her brown soft rippling hair; her quiet face was bent over her work, and raised from time to time to look down the street, in hope of seeing him come. She felt sad; she expected him *now*; but the thought came to her, how many evenings would pass in the future, when she need not expect him. And at this hour he had always come, trudging home after his day's work, he, and another with him. Another, who now that Jim was leaving, would also come no more. And as Margie stitched, hot tears were dropping on her work. She heard her mother's voice in the back room giving directions to the servants, and bustling over Jim's portman-

teaux ; and Margie felt sore for her as well—a widow, and parting with her only son. Margie wished school-days could last for ever.

She had never been a school-girl, however; in education, she had been almost a school-boy. All the womanly elements in her training she had imbibed from her mother, who was gentle, soft, and eminently womanly in her powers. All the intellectual element, so fully developed in her broad fair brow, she had imbibed day by day, year by year, hand in hand, and mind ringing with mind, along with her brother Jim. She had no school-books, no teachers save his.

They were young, intellectual enthusiasts—the brother and sister—keen appreciators, thirsty drinkers at the rich fountains of literature and learning that flowed all around them in their modern Athens.

They had too their intellectual idol, and they worshipped him together.

Margie had to wait a long time that evening for Jim; for when at last he had finished his farewell to the view over the Canongate, and raised his folded arms from

their resting-place on the coping-stone, he did not come immediately homewards.

He turned off his way at the statue before the Register Office, and struck into a little street winding round behind the buildings, where, among the tall, many-storied houses, there were lodgings for the students of the poorer class.

Jim stopped before one of these, and rang a bell, one among many ranged on each side of the door; then, without waiting for an answer, he ran quickly up the stairs, flight after flight, till he reached nearly the top of the house. There he paused, just as a door on the right of the landing was opened mysteriously by a mechanism from within, and a passage was disclosed, dark and dingy, lighted only by a window let in above the door. Jim entered, and had almost to grope his way. He fell presently with boot and fist against a door in one corner.

"Halloo!" came a voice from within. Jim turned the handle, and without ceremony he entered.

Amid the clouds of smoke that curled

over everything, and floated under the low ceiling, he distinguished a quantity of confused substance furnishing a small room—books and writing materials crowded everywhere — an open window looking upon nothing but the chimney-pots and the summer sky, and the broad shoulders of a man writing at a table at the window, his back turned towards Jim.

“Halloo!” exclaimed the writer again, without ceasing his writing or turning round, “who is there?”

Jim closed the door, and came and stood by the speaker’s side. He laid his hand on the huge shoulder.

“Deane,” he said, “you did not come to us this morning, so I have come to you.”

The pen was laid down, and Deane folded his arms across his chest, leant back in his chair, and looked up at Jim.

“Why did you not come?”

He was looking down into Deane’s face as he spoke, and his eyes were kindling as he met the expression in those raised to his.

Robert Deane’s countenance was ugly,

with the rugged ugliness nature seems to have hewn for some Scotchmen out of their native rocks. It was hard-featured, and strong cast; the huge forehead was literally built up of knots and promontories, rugged as a boulder stone. He had a mass of black hair, thick and tangled as a crow's nest, eyebrows that made a shaggy bridge over eyes, whose depth, tenderness, and fire lit up the whole dark face with a beauty such as a gleam of sunshine drops on a mountain side.

"Laddie," he said, "it was kind of you to come. I kept away from your home on purpose to-day."

"Why, Robert?"

"Because," said Deane hesitatingly, "I felt sorry and soft towards those who are in it."

"Good reason for you to come," replied Jim. "I want you to speak a few words of courage to my poor mother, when she sees me go; and to Margie, too," he added.

Robert turned his face away. "What may I—what *could* I, I mean—say to them that could comfort them, lad? *Man must go*

forth to his labour—your mother knows it all better than I can tell her.”

“Never mind; you come,” persisted Jim.

“James, I *must* not!” exclaimed Robert, with a fierce emphasis and a heaving sigh.

“Why not, Deane?”

“I have got an article to write,” answered the other, suddenly rousing himself, and taking up his pen again.

“Nonsense! leave your article. Never mind it; you will have plenty of time to write it when you return home. Come with me, Robert; it is the last evening.”

“Well, lad,” he answered, half willingly, “I suppose you must have your way;” and he rose and shook himself, and pulled off his rough study coat.

Jim turned towards the writing-table, and went on: “What have you got here—something good, I hope?”

“Nothing very remunerative, at all events,” replied Robert, with a shadow on his face. “I think scribbling is at a discount.”

Jim looked distressed and sympathetic.

"Never mind, old fellow," he answered. "You will do it all right some day, I am confident."

"Who knows!" sighed Robert. "Who knows! Come along, Jim, I am ready. After all," he continued, as they clattered down the stone stairs, "it is better to be starving on a crust up here, with freedom of thought and liberty of pen, with nothing but the blue sky to meet the soaring of the spirit at its will,—far better, Jim, is it not, than a bondage of conventional labour at so much per annum, for so much thought? No man's wages; but no man's slave!"

Jim looked grave as they stood together in the street.

"Yes, it is glorious—it is liberty. I envy you from the bottom of my heart, Deane. You have freedom, time and power to study, develop, and produce. I have had to choose a different way."

Deane stopped and turned upon him, with an eager light in his eyes.

"Hush, lad," he said; "I was speaking as a fool, to console myself, boy, not to

rouse dissatisfaction in you. I have been a madman. I have wasted my best years, scattered my best powers; and now, at thirty years of age, when it comes to a man to wish for an ingle-nook, and a wife and wee bairnies of his own, I have nothing wherewith to build, nothing to offer, nothing to bestow."

"Cheer up!" exclaimed Jim. "There's a good time coming. Fortune's wheel *must* turn, Deane, for a man like you."

"The philosopher's stone *may* be found," he replied bitterly. "James, I wish I were twenty-two again, with just the goal before me I have in my life now."

Jim did not understand him, and only answered one word in his remark.

"Yes," he said, "there is nothing like a goal. I can hardly define mine, Robert; but I think it is—I would be strong. I will persevere until I dominate. I would have nothing dominate over me. I take a purpose in my hand;—independence, honour for the name of Lindsay, and for my father's house; and I would uphold this against

circumstances, against what men call temptation, against sentiment, against all these changes and vibrations of taste and feeling, that I see *weight* men in the race of life. It is but a humble goal, you will say, Robert ; I have had to come down a good way to it since the years of certain day-dreams, of which you know."

"It is a good goal, Jamie, and it will last till—" he laughed a little scornfully, and left his sentence unfinished.

"Till when, Robert ?" persisted Jim, with indignant eagerness.

"Till such time, laddie, as you meet what is stronger than you, and what is stronger than resolve, or any other thing."

"And what is that?" exclaimed Jim, drawing up his vigorous figure, and looking keenly confident in his strength.

"Just your fate, boy," said the elder quietly. "Meet it fair, be courageous with it ; but do not think it will not master you, and mould you, and make your life for you, for it will."

"Deane," said Jim gravely, "you have

taken to discoursing lately a more extraordinary description of sentimental philosophy than I ever expected to hear from you. Surely you are not talking of love-affairs, and such rubbish; as if any earthly influence on the feelings could prevail to mould the life of a man for him, or turn him from his duty or his resolve."

"You are strong in your untried philosophy, young one," said Deane, with his cynical smile. "Come and talk to me ten years hence on this matter—and meantime, here we are."

Margie saw them coming at last, and she met her brother and his friend at the drawing-room door. She greeted both with a smile, but there was a flush colouring her cheek as she turned to Robert, and her hand seemed to linger a moment in the clasp of his. He turned curtly from her as he dropped her hand, and they went all together into the room.

But they had no conversation, for before a word had been exchanged, Mrs. Lindsay's voice was heard calling Jim, from

the inner room, and he turned to answer her.

Marjory gathered up the work she had been doing for him. "Do not go, Mr. Deane," she said; and then she followed her brother from the room.

Robert sat down in her place by the window. He took up the book she had been reading; he peered into her work-box; he raised one little article of her housewife's craft after another daintily in his fingers, and laid them down reverently again. Then he leant back, and looked out of the window at the Castle Rock.]

Robert Deane was a Bohemian, though a Bohemian of pure Celtic blood. His birth-place was a turf-thatched cottage on a moor's edge, far north. He was a schoolmaster's son, and had been the laird's playfellow. He had enormous talent, and was an omnivorous student. He was cast in a gigantic mould, and owned a vigorous and untiring brain. He wielded a pen, sometimes keen and caustic, sometimes tender and poetic. He had been taught with the laird, who

was his foster-brother, and had soon outstripped the young patrician intellect, as they learnt.

The laird had gone to Oxford, had become Anglicised, been converted to Episcopacy, and had grown rapidly High Church. He had married the daughter of an English bishop, who fanned his Episcopacy, and inspired him with the thought of building up the ruined cloister of the old family chapel, and of establishing a daily service, with a private chaplain of their own. Which was all, so far, good.

But it was a strange fancy of young Davidson to think that his favourite—burly Robert Deane, with his rugged face and strange erratic ways—might be converted into a ritualistic curate. But the fancy took him, and Robert was sent to Oxford, where he was indeed right glad to go.

There, his vagrant education was concluded; but not, alas! with any result accordant with his patron's views. Robert pushed on vigorously to the very verge of the Thirty-nine Articles, when a reaction of

sentiment attacked him, and a sudden revolution subverted his ideas.

A gust of memory swept over him, bringing back, amid the halls and cloisters of Oxford, a thought of the stern religion of the kirk by the moorside. And he took violently to the study of the blood-stained annals of the children of the Covenanters; to the histories of those pastors and their flocks who were hunted and persecuted in the early days of his Church; to the long record of names, beloved and venerated, among the people of his nation; the ancient founders of the Scottish Kirk, whose life-blood had drenched the heather of many a well-known knoll near his father's home.

And Robert caught a spark of the old enthusiasm—declared himself loudly a Presbyterian, and quarrelled openly with his patron, who, not being a man of large views, never spoke to him again.

Deane cared little for this. He shouldered his possessions, turned his back upon Oxford, and went straight to Edinburgh, avowedly to become a minister of the Kirk.

And, once there, he ran his head straight against the Longer and the Shorter Catechism, and the whole reverend assembly of divines. Predestination, literal interpretation, in fact *all* the keystones of Calvinism, became stumbling-blocks and rocks of offence to him.

He thought deeply, he talked loud, he made enemies in all directions, and soon realised that a pulpit of the Kirk was no place for him.

He broke away, and joined the storm-tossed band of the "uncertain," those children of twilight, and strong eager desire, —the day-seekers, the *miners* of this world, the men who are bold to say "they seek for, —they do not know." His wild spirit floated its own strange way, high up among the realms of the beautiful, reaching often the very doorway of the divine. It was a strong, entangled soul within his large frame; and without, was a life, pure indeed, almost to asceticism, but tangled too; warped and indefinite, a vague tossing amid inevitable rocks.

Nearly thirty, and having quarrelled with

his only important friend, Robert Deane, when he retired from his purpose of entering the Scotch Church, was sorely puzzled, not only what to do with his life, but how to support it.

He took to his pen, thinking to farm out his fertile brain. But it was a difficult business. Those were strange, untidy thoughts of his, and nobody seemed to want them. He got an article now and then to write, or wrote one and had it accepted, but he nearly starved over the undertaking, and had recourse to teaching at last. He took evening pupils to prepare for the schools.

Fate brought him in contact with Jim Lindsay. He became his tutor, and never had a further step to go in search of his evening's work.

And there, there grew up into his life, gradually, irresistibly, as evening by evening he guided the two young minds through the labyrinths of literature and science, as he watched the young faces, fresh, thoughtful, and intelligent, bending over their books, there grew up within him something

different from himself, from his own wild, lawless soul.

A reflection, ever present, of brown ripply hair, and of grey eyes earnest and trustful; a reflection that fed day and night a fire of passion, of regret, of tenderness, that kept burning within.

He awoke at length, amid the intoxicating sweetness of these successive evenings to recognise it, and to call it—*love*, and he realised his own position.

He, the reckless, homeless Bohemian, the “ne’er-do-weel,” at length he envied other men, who had definite duties, quiet homes, and fair competencies built up, to share which they might ask the woman they loved.

He saw the life of a living faith—the harmony of souls at peace, the harmony of a home of pure, simple lives; and he felt as a man feels, when struggling through the dark tempests of a winter’s night, he passes a cottage home, and the light streams upon him through the window, and he looks in, to see love and quiet happiness, such as his

storm-tossed life has never known. He had not got even a *hearing* from the world yet, and it had been so sweet through all this time, those soft eyes raised to his in sympathy, the low, thrilling voice uttering its comments of appreciation and praise. So sweet—and now—now it was all rushing through his mind again this evening, as he leant back silent and still. He had scarcely realised it afresh, scarcely faced once more the dark future looming on him beyond Jim's departure, when the door opened, and they were both in the room.

Jim began fidgeting about, collecting his few remaining possessions, and carrying them to his mother. Marjory came straight to where Robert sat. He looked at her, a grave, scrutinizing expression in his eyes.

"What are you thinking about?" she said, answering his gaze inquiringly.

"I was thinking about colour, and wondering which is yours. Yes. It is green, certainly green," he said with decided emphasis. He had been gazing, as he waited for her, at the cluster of birch-

trees nestling in the hollow of the Castle Rock.

“What?” replied Marjory.

“Colour,” he continued, “and its analogies. I was thinking of them just then. It always strikes me afresh with admiration, each time I observe it, that all nature should be set in green.”

“Yes,” said Marjory in an accent of assent. “Go on,” her tone said distinctly.

“I like tracing its analogy to character. There is more than a mere perfection of taste in this nature-setting—there is repose, tranquillity, rest for the eye, refreshment for the spirit, as you turn from every other hue, to sink the gaze into the deep shadowings of green. And every character has its responsive colour: flaunting scarlet; sombre and depressing brown, shading into black; yellow, shallow and uninteresting; blue, bright and sunlit as the dazzling radiance of the sea; and all wearying, all unfinished in our nature’s harmony, till the green setting, shadowy and reposeful, comes richly enfolding all.”

"And green is ?——"

"Peace, love, anchorage," he murmured, "whatever to the *heart* is home."

Jim came up as he concluded. "My dear fellow," he exclaimed, "anything so sentimental as you have grown! Your reflections sound more like the Sunday pages in Margie's diary than your quondam, cynical philosophy."

"Practical commercialist!" laughed Robert. "You have a heart like a nether millstone, Jim, behind those young ribs of yours."

"Have I? Well, sentiment has not been my line, certainly. I fancy one needs some toughness for the kind of life before one in this world down here."

"After all, Master Jim has his bits of sentiment too," said Margie; "look here." And she drew his watch from his pocket, and displayed the crooked half of a broken sixpence, slung on the chain by a silver ring. Jim blushed.

"Ah," said Robert Deane, "and where does this come from?"

"Halloween follies," laughed Jim.

"A birthday cake, was it not?" said Margie.

"Yes; it is ever so long ago. I don't know why I keep it here, except that I said I would."

"But what is the romance?" persisted Robert.

"Oh, it was out at Sea Grange," answered Jim. "Trixie's birthday fell on Halloween, and I found the ring in the cake, you know, and she got the sixpence."

"And don't you remember," interrupted Margie, "how old nurse translated it?—hers was to be a destiny told in money, and yours would be moulded by love."

"Very likely!" said Jim sarcastically.

"But how came you into possession of the sixpence?"

"Oh, Trixie coveted my findings, and I made a bargain with her. She gave me half the sixpence, and I gave her the ring—that is the story for you. Well," he added in the proud superiority of his twenty-two years, "I suppose we have all been juvenile, and had our Halloweens."

"The Sea Grange party are at Portobello, are they not?" said Robert.

"Yes; more's the pity," replied Jim. "I wish they were at home. I would run out to Sea Grange to-night, to give Aunt Helen a parting hug. I went down and said good-bye to them all the other day. Halloo! who can this be, I wonder?"

There was a loud ring at the door bell, followed by the sound of a boisterous, cheery voice echoing up from the lobby below.

"It is Godfrey!" exclaimed Jim. "I'm so glad. It is capital of him to have looked me up again. I will go down and bring him in." And he hurried from the room.

In one moment he was back again.

"Do not go, Robert," he said, putting his head in at the door, "wait here till I come back. I am only going a step or two along the road with Goff Hamilton;" and he was gone.

Mrs. Lindsay's voice came calling from the inner room, inquiring where Jim was going. She opened the door for a moment,

and showed her soft, downy face, pale to-night with a shadow of sadness.

"Ah, Mr. Deane, you must not leave till Jamie returns. Order the tea, Margie;" and she disappeared again.

The soft summer twilight came falling over them at the bow-window, and Robert and Marjory were left to enjoy it alone.

They were silent for a few minutes. Marjory was gazing towards the Castle, and thinking over Robert's words. And he was gazing at *her*, feasting his eyes with hungry eagerness on the fair, composed outline of her face. Presently she said—

"I think I follow your idea of the green setting. Of course you mean much more than merely our home, the houses we dwell in."

"I mean," he interrupted her vehemently, "all *I* have lost! Home, in its many senses: the place on earth that is ours, to which we may ever in weariness return; again, the background of accustomed thought, of life-long convictions into which those who are unshaken in their ancient credulities retire,

under every doubt, through every controversy of the soul; and, more than all, the green shadowings of a home-love that never fails us. I had all three once, and I have lost them all!"

"I suppose," said Margie musingly, "it is the bravest spirits that strike out into the boundless world, either in fact, or in thought and inquiry."

She only noticed the first two applications of his simile. Her answer to his last sentence was in the wistful sympathy of her brown eyes as she turned them upon his face.

"It is the plunge out of calm into storm," he answered.

"But through storms we come to peace again. 'So he bringeth them to the haven where they would be,' " she quoted, in a low reverent tone. The words seemed to fire him with renewed excitement.

"Margie," he exclaimed, "I have been in a haven; I have found one! I stood without it once, gazing longingly, and then I floated gently in, and I have been so happy, and now——"

He looked up at her, and their eyes met in kindling tenderness, and Margie's fell beneath his.

"There is a haven for all," she said softly, "who seek one in simplicity and truth."

"But mine is here, Margie—here, in the light of your eyes, and the quiet halo of your home-love. And now I must come no more, I must come no more!" he exclaimed, in accents of bitter agony.

Margie looked up at him again.

"I hope you will come sometimes," she said. He caught her hand, he gazed into her face bent shyly away from him in the twilight, and he saw it melting and quivering under his fervent eyes.

"Margie, Margie," he said, "may I come? When I tell you boldly that I love you, may I come? I tell you my love for you has changed every current of my life. You have been like the sun of heaven to me, streaming with a summer sweetness into the prison darkness of my heart. Margie, may I come, may I come? I have nothing to offer you, nothing to promise

you, nothing to spread before you, but a long, long weary waiting for an end unknown."

He drew her close to him, and she did not resist him.

"It will be better to wait *with* you than *for* you, Robert," she whispered, and he understood. The strong arm caught her to his heart, and she nestled close to him. He bent his dark head low over hers, and pressed his lips to her soft braided hair.

"My darling, my darling!" he murmured again.

"Robert!" she whispered to him so softly in reply that the words scarcely stole up to his ear, "Robert, I shall not mind waiting now."

The summer twilight came falling softly, and no one disturbed them through one long love-lit hour.

Jim had gone across the Deane Bridge, and was striding along the broad road towards the Corstorphines with Goff Hamilton of the Craig.

The two lads were curious contrasts as

they walked together, Goff's arm thrown across Jim's shoulder, and his tall figure bending above Jim's head. Long ago the High School rector had christened the two boys "Work" and "Play," and a glance at both sufficed for conviction that the names were very suitable.

Jim's erect springy form spoke energy, purpose, the power of effort, and the love of it.

Godfrey's figure, far larger and more strongly built, expressed in every movement an indolent nature combined with great physical force. There was an easy, negligent swing in his walk, an air of careless command in the rapid glance of his eyes, that spoke a will accustomed to assert itself successfully with little effort, and with no expectation of being opposed.

It was a very brilliant young face,—blue eyes, dancing and gleeful, light brown hair tossed back, wavy and thick, a fresh rounded cheek, where the flush of youth went and came with a rapidity that showed a keen, fervent temperament.

He was costumed from head to foot in a

flannel boating dress, with arms bare to the elbow and a straw hat pushed far back on his head, and he had been describing vociferously to Jim all the way out from Castle Street, a race they had been pulling above Hermiston that day, he "and a fellow in the 15th Hussars," as he expressed it. Goff had been the winner, and was triumphant.

He rattled on, Jim answering sympathetically till they reached, a mile or two from town, a low wall surrounding a large park. Fine old trees swept down upon the road, and under one of them was a rough stile, at the end of a green pathway that led across the park, and wound out of sight among the trees.

"Here we are," said Godfrey, and they stopped and faced each other. "Jim, it is horrid, your going away."

"In some ways it is," said Jim.

"Oh, it's disgusting. I'll never come near the place again till you return."

"I suppose when you're Gazetted you will be quartered in London for a good bit?"

"Yes; and I'm awfully glad of it as you will not be here. Jim, how I would hate going out to that slow old place if I were you! It isn't a bit the sort of thing you would have liked, is it?"

"One cannot always choose, you know, Goff."

"Well," said the boy, throwing up his head, "it is a thing I do not understand how a fellow *can* do a thing he does not want to do."

"Do you not know at all the feeling," said Jim, "when a fellow thinks he won't be beaten by any one, not even by himself?"

"You have a kind of way of chopping up yourself into two of you!" exclaimed Goff, laughing. "I am only sensible of being one; it is I, Godfrey Forbes Hamilton, *per se*, and between wanting and having and hating and resisting, I do not know any compromise at all. I would not do it, Jim, old boy, if I were you."

"I dare say not," said Jim quietly, and he looked up into the bright face. Godfrey had

sprung over the stile, and was leaning upon it, his arms folded on the upper bar, and his face bending towards Jim.

The words of an old Jacobite ballad came into Jim's mind, a verse that he had often heard Robert Deane troll out in his rich voice as they had walked over the hills together. To those who do not know the music it expresses but half its idea, but to Jim at that moment, the words, with their defiant air, described to him exactly, and brought back to him ever afterwards, Goff Hamilton as he stood smiling there.

"For to daunten me! and I see young!
And I King Jamie's ainly son.
Oh! that's a thing can never, never be,
For the man he is nae born that could daunten me."

And yet there was weakness somewhere round the mouth. The character was written on every feature. You could coerce Goff Hamilton to *nothing*; you might cajole him into almost *anything*.

More than an hour had passed when Mrs. Lindsay broke in upon Robert and Marjory in the summer twilight.

Margie came close up to her, took her hand in hers, and drew her towards the window.

"Mother," she said, "you are to part with your son. God has given you another."

Mrs. Lindsay looked from her to Robert, —and back into her face again.

"Margie, my child, my darling!" she exclaimed in bewilderment, "what do you mean?"

Deane rose, and stood straight before her.

"Will you have me, Mrs. Lindsay?" he said. "Margie has given herself away to me. I know I am terribly unworthy; but will you let her try to make me more fit to belong to her?"

He had Mrs. Lindsay's hand tight within his own.

"Robert," she answered, "I am bewildered. There is no one we love as we do you, and you know it well; but what does Jamie say? Where is your brother, Margie? has he been told?" and Mrs. Lindsay looked round in search of him just

as the door opened, and Jim re-entered the room.

"Jamie!" exclaimed Mrs. Lindsay, drawing her hand away from Robert and running to her son. He stopped in the doorway, and looked at her.

Robert came forward; he closed the door, and before Mrs. Lindsay could speak again, he said—

"James, I have been asking to be a son to your mother while you are away."

Jim was about to speak, but his mother interrupted, and Margie came close to them, and slid her hand into Robert's again.

"Jamie," said Mrs. Lindsay, "Robert is asking us for our Margie."

A quick flush mounted to Jim's forehead, and an expression of anger clouded his face, as he turned upon Deane.

"Robert,—" he began, but the other stopped him.

"James," he said hurriedly, "there is nothing you can tell me that I do not know. I am utterly and inexpressibly unworthy to ask for such a one as she is. I have nothing

to offer her—nothing, you will say, to support her, if she came and gave herself to me. But she has taken me, lad, in confidence and hope, and before heaven I promise you to be worthy of her love. Oh, boy, I have been beaten! I have been fighting sore battles with myself, and you brought me here this night to be conquered. You must trust me now, James; and, indeed, God knows I love the child too tenderly to woo her into poverty and woe.”

The angry light faded from Jim’s eyes as Deane spoke to him, a soft kindliness came in its stead; he held out his hand.

“Robert,” he said, “I trust you through and through. Though I am far away, you will not take her until you can give her a home.”

Such was the state of matters Jim left behind him in South Castle Street. In twelve hours more he was gone.

CHAPTER II.

TRIXIE.

"I watched her in the morning hour,
So pure and fresh and fair,
A blossom bursting into flower,
That gladdened all the air."

JIM had been away four years.

Years, to him, of hard labour, of steady effort towards a definite aim ; years to Godfrey Hamilton of sunny youth-life in the Guards, of money-spending, of wild-oats sowing in every direction, and of every kind ; years to Robert Deane of a restless struggle towards a still unattained success ; years to Marjory of the patience of hope, of waiting, lightened by love—years when sympathy and encouragement was the work of her life, and simple trust in Providence her mainstay. She never could be down-hearted. She had

unlimited confidence in Robert's powers and in the goodness of her God, and so she waited. And their lives went rolling on a-pace, four years setting their mark on all.

In the family group at Sea Grange and the circle surrounding Aunt Helen, these years worked extraordinary changes. They saw very nearly the completion of Aunt Helen's self-imposed task; they finished the education period in the schoolroom where she reigned despotic.

She had had rather a time of it. When, ten years ago, she had undertaken the charge and general "doing for" of her niece's little motherless children, she had undertaken it with the stern resolve of doing her duty by them, and no one could say she had not done it.

When they arrived that night, and she beheld for the first time the group invading her quiet territory, she had been a little daunted, and no wonder.

They had come on a blustering winter night, and Miss Helen had been ready for

them, with a large fire in the red dining-room, and tea, with plenty of accompanying good things on the table, and lights lit, and comforts prepared in the snug bedrooms upstairs. They had come in upon her—first Colonel O'Neil, then four boys of various sizes, and lastly, a harsh-featured woman, leading a little girl.

Colonel O'Neil was tall and very thin, he had a beaky nose, a long drooping moustache, a sallow skin, darkened by foreign suns, a pair of blue eyes, and a general air of having been good-looking, and of having known it.

He wore very tight boots, appeared indolent and indifferent, and said little in response to Miss Helen's vociferous welcome beyond, "'Pon my honour." He had been very seasick, felt cross with the cold weather, looked disgusted with Miss Helen's tea arrangements, and murmured something, as he rubbed his hands over the fire, of "not having dined yet."

Two of the boys were big fellows, then came the girl, then the two little baby-

things. They told their names successively on being demanded, and each name disgusted Aunt Helen more than the last, "Greville," "Albert," "Percy," and "Rupert."

"Good Heavens ! what cognomens for the blood of Lindsay !" and as if Beatrix was not outlandish enough, its abbreviation "Trixie" was positively impish and unchristianlike in Miss Helen's ears.

Nevertheless she got them all comfortably fed, and tucked away to rest, in the row of new cots in their nursery, and then she had come back to Colonel O'Neil, sat staring at him, hated him, and quarrelled soundly with him that very evening.

She had the best of it, and he never contradicted her again.

"Horrible woman !" he used to say *sotto voce*, but he never said anything aloud, and he never was rebellious. She took him in hand with the rest.

The boys gave her enough to do. She soon had them all in warm grey stuffs and woollen comforters, trundling morning after

morning to school in her old buggy, and coming back again in the afternoon. No truant-playing from Sea Grange.

She was very good to them, fed them, clothed them, gave them Saturday treats and Christmas puddings and Halloween festivities, until they came to years of discretion, and she felt she had done her part.

Of her success she was doubtful. "What is born in the bone will come out in the blood," she would say to herself with many a mysterious shake of the head, and for her part, she "did not like the Irish connection." She would like to see the end of it; she greatly misdoubted they were "randies."

Among them all she had had a time of it, and she was not over-fond of this batch of nephews.

Her favourite had been the quiet manly boy in South Castle Street, a Lindsay every inch of him, in looks, in character, and in name. She did her duty by the wild O'Neil boys, but they did not get into her heart. She had opened that for Marjory and Jim,

and they had warmed it. For it had been a stern old heart for many years before they came, and no doubt they softened and prepared it for the jewel that at last stole in, and dropped deep down into its very depths, and dwelt there, a brightness, a glory, and a joy to Aunt Helen, to the latest moment of her life.

It was after passing the boys sternly in review that first evening, that she had come to the harsh-featured nurse, with the girl, and Miss Helen had looked down into the little face upraised to hers, and had been touched to the very heart by its radiant childish beauty.

Dark blue Irish eyes, full of shyness and restlessness, and temper, long silky lashes, with tears of fatigue glistening upon them, a rounded cheek with a flush of soft crimson, bright scarlet lips parted in a little heaving sob, and showing rows of pearly teeth. A sweet fresh baby thing, beautiful as a morning sunbeam, soft and downy, full of dancing lights and passionate shadows, and quick changes of summer shine and shower.

They had a scene that first evening.

Trixie would eat nothing, would speak to no one, would not stay in the dining-room, and would not go to bed. Aunt Helen was perplexed, and appealed to Colonel O'Neil. He swore mildly and ordered Trixie from the room; said "'Pon his honour," when Miss Helen growled at him, and wondered what was the use of paying a nurse.

Trixie screamed furiously for four terrible hours, while Aunt Helen sat "giving Colonel O'Neil her mind." Then at last tranquillity reigned; Trixie was supposed to have screamed herself to sleep.

But next evening it came all over again, a loud passionate wail echoing from the nursery, as Colonel O'Neil and Miss Helen sat down to dinner.

An exclamation of disgust broke from the father, and Miss Helen threw down her napkin and sprung hurriedly from her seat.

"Unmanageable little monkey!" exclaimed Colonel O'Neil, looking with an expression of protest and appeal from Miss

Helen to the soup tureen ; "there is no use going to her."

"Eat your dinner," uttered Aunt Helen, "do not wait for me;" and she disappeared up-stairs.

There on the nursery floor lay Trixie, struggling and kicking, her beautiful sun-beam face distorted with passion, and her angry screams seeming to fill the room.

The nurse stood over her, scolding, haranguing, threatening, pouring every species of vituperation and menace on her head.

The boys looked on at a little distance, half awed by the tumult, and half amused by the deafening confusion of the row.

"Get away!" exclaimed Aunt Helen, sweeping down upon them, and clearing them with one swoop into the other room. "How can you stand gaping at the child!"

"Trixie's in her tantrums," protested Greville solemnly.

"Humph!" ejaculated Miss Helen, then she banged the door, and shut them all out. Trixie screamed on. Nurse was somewhat

silenced by Miss Lindsay's appearance, but she burst out again.

"It is no use, ma'am, she is a perfect little devil. It is a business like this every night to get her to bed, and I've shaken her and scolded her till I'm hoarse, and it is no good."

Miss Helen looked at her contemptuously for a moment, then threw the door open again. "Get out!" she vociferated; "get out, I say; *will* you go?"

"I, ma'am! out of my own nursery!"

"Get out!" shouted Miss Helen; and she seized the woman by the shoulders, and pushed her from the room. She closed the door carefully, and came back to the child.

Trixie screamed on, and Miss Helen sat down in silence. She drew her chair to the window, and looked away from Trixie,—out into the darkness, and waited.

The violent passion lasted some minutes longer, wild screams still breaking from the little creature; and Miss Helen waited, until at last it subsided, the cries sank away, and

Trixie sat up on the floor, pushing back her hair, and sobbing in angry, sulky misery for some time. Then she rubbed her pinafore over her eyes, she looked up at Aunt Helen, as she sat so placid and so still, and at length she got up slowly, and crept to Miss Helen's side, and pulled her sleeve.

"I am sorry!" she whispered, very-low. And Aunt Helen turned upon her, her pale, sorrowful face. She looked so very pained that Trixie nearly began again; she drooped her head, and almost turned away,—but suddenly Aunt Helen bent over her.

She caught up the child in her arms, and gathered her to her, she pillowed the little head on her shoulder, and rocked herself to and fro with a passionate energy of tenderness.

"Ma puir, wee, mitherless bairn!" she exclaimed, in the broad Scotch that came back naturally to her tongue when anything excited her. "Wee, mitherless bairn!"—and she broke out crying over Isabel's orphaned child.

"Trixie," she said at length, when she

was calm, "this is very sad, this is very terrible ; are you often like this ?"

"Oh, I'm very naughty, auntie—often, often ; but indeed I do love you, and I'll always be good with you."

"We'll see, my bairn," said Aunt Helen, and she rocked her gently again, until the heavy eyelids drooped upon the cheek, and Trixie sobbed herself to sleep.

Then Aunt Helen rose. She held Trixie close in her arms, she stalked out of the room, passed the nurse in austere silence, carried the sleeping child along the passage into her own bedroom, and put her into the corner of her own huge bed.

"Colonel O'Neil," she exclaimed, bursting into the dining-room, where the Colonel was composedly proceeding with his dinner, "you must get rid of that woman."

"'Pon my honour,"—he began, looking up.

"'Pon my nonsense !" retorted Aunt Helen ; "get rid of the woman, I say."

"Really, I cannot—I do not—" protested the Colonel.

"Get rid of her. If you do not, I will.

She is spoiling the child's temper, and she will break her spirit."

"Really, Miss Lindsay," expostulated Colonel O'Neil, in a feeble protest against the tumultuous interruption to his repast, "you are perfectly welcome to make any arrangements you please in the nursery government, only pray do not expect me to have an opinion on the subject. Is the little termagant quiet?"

"Quiet as a lamb, and sleeping like an infant," retorted Miss Helen.

"Ah! I am very glad. Sorry you had so much trouble; children are a pest. Excellent claret, this of yours, Miss Lindsay. I see you understand the mysteries of the cellar."

"Humph!" said Miss Helen, and she sat down in silence to her dinner.

She took her knitting after that, and sat clicking her needles together opposite the Colonel, while he stretched himself in a large chair before the fire, and gazed at her, wondering, in inward dismay, how he was to live through the existence before

him with the sole companionship of Miss Helen.

It was astonishing how well they got on. He succumbed, and she managed him. She made him comfortable, gave him and his children a home. He became a member of the Club in Edinburgh; he went south now and then for change of society and ideas; and he managed to get through life pretty tolerably—dining at Sea Grange as seldom as possible, and knowing less of his children than any one else in the house.

And now years had rolled over them, and one dewy morning in spring had come about four years after Jim had left South Castle Street.

Aunt Helen sat in her morning parlour, a low-ceilinged, wainscoted room, with warm crimson hangings; a deep bay-window looking out upon the garden, where the spring flowers were bursting into bloom, where the birds were singing a merry carol in the primal joy of the early springtide sun.

There was a pretty view from the bay-

window, far across the garden ; and through the openings cut in the old thick shrubbery the Firth came in sight, a distant sheet of glistening silver, softening away at the horizon into a vapoury mist of blending sky and sea.

From the first morning of spring sunshine, until the chill of autumn drove her to the fireside again, the bay-window was Miss Helen's seat. She had her arm-chair wheeled into the corner, and her little, red-covered table by its side. Her spectacles lay always upon the table, and her large old Bible, her household receipt book, and with them the volume of literature intended for the studies of the day for Aunt Helen and Beatrix.

The spectacles, however, lay often idle now ; Aunt Helen's eyes were growing dim, and she could read but little. She sat through many hours, her hands folded upon her black silk apron, her placid face, with its setting of soft white tulle, turned towards the window, while her eyes rested quietly upon the view.

She had done her work through all these years, and it had tired her.

This morning the book had been soon set aside; it lay open with its face downwards upon the table at Miss Helen's elbow—a grim, solemn-looking volume; and opposite to it, eyeing it with a quaint, pathetic dissatisfaction, sat Trixie, leaning back in a low rocking-chair, her hands clasped above her head, and a pile of plain work disregarded on the floor beside her.

Aunt Helen looked suddenly round.

“Trixie, child, take up your work again.”

Trixie shook her head; she rocked herself backwards and forwards, and gazed up at the ceiling with a great sigh.

“Bore—bore—bore—selvidge, gusset, and seam!” she replied, in a voice of grave conclusion.

“What!” exclaimed Miss Helen.

“It is my parody on Hood, auntie—listen, ‘Bore—bore,’”—began Trixie again.

“Hush, for shame, what an unseemly sentiment! My dear child, I regard a love of plain work as one of the fundamental

elements in the happiness and stability of a young female's character."

"I wish I were not a young female!" sighed Trixie.

"My dear," expostulated Miss Helen.

"It is only the laziness of summer coming on, with the sunshine and the flowers, aunt. I do not like plain work. I can stand it in winter when there is nothing else to do—even 'standard writers' have a sort of charm of their own then; but now spring is come, and summer will soon be here; and oh, auntie, I want life to begin."

She brought her hands down from above her head, clasped them suddenly round her knee, and bent eagerly forward, gazing into the old lady's face.

Aunt Helen turned towards her, and smoothed the flushed cheek softly with her hand. "My darling, life has begun for you, and has been going on. What is it, from first to last, Trixie, but a daily duty?"

Trixie shook her head impatiently. "I am horribly wicked, Aunt Helen, I know I am; but I don't like it. I don't care for

my life a bit. I am tired of shirts and mendings, and makings. I love *you*," she went on impetuously, gliding down from her chair on to her knees by her aunt's side, "I love you, and everything I do for you has a life in it for your sake. But oh, Aunt Helen, I want more—more—I want to live."

"I hope you have not got the wandering fancy in you, child, that took John Lindsay and your mother away?"

"Well, I do not know. I think it must be glorious to strike out over the world, as the boys do; but I do not think I want exactly to travel. It is only I feel I have grown up, auntie; I have come to my life, and I want to live it."

Aunt Helen pushed back the hair from the girl's forehead, and looked tenderly into the eager face. It was little changed in colouring or in feature from the fresh beauty of its early childhood. A small, perfect oval, with rich contrasts and harmonies of colour, a creamy skin, with a soft flush coming and going upon the cheek, scarlet lips, dark eyes, delicate eyebrows, and long silky

lashes. "Surely," thought Aunt Helen, "there was a life, a history, a future in that bright beautiful face."

Suddenly Trixie sprang to her feet. "Ah!" she exclaimed, looking eagerly from the window, "I see—I see somebody. It is Margie. There, do you not see her, aunt? coming along the pathway by the field? There she is, just at the stile."

Aunt Helen looked. "Your eyes are younger than mine, Trixie; I should not have known it to be her."

"Oh, but it is though—I know it is!" cried the girl, peering earnestly. "Would it be very wicked now, auntie, to leave Rupert's shirt to its fate, and to scamper across the garden to meet her? It is just the very thing this person would like to do."

Aunt Helen shook her head, but she did not look very unpropitious, and so away went Trixie, bounding through the low window, and out of sight for a few minutes among the shrubberies; then she appeared again, and Aunt Helen could see her running over the field below, her light dress

glistening in the sunshine, and her footsteps seeming scarcely to tread the grass.

Presently the two girls were to be seen, coming back together, walking demurely along, and then suddenly Trixie broke away from Margie's side, and came running before her across the garden, and in at the window, back to Miss Helen again.

"Oh, auntie!" she exclaimed in breathless excitement, "Margie has a secret, a nice piece of news, she says, and she won't tell me till she is in here by you."

"Indeed!" said Miss Helen, looking up into Margie's quiet face, as the latter approached and crossed the threshold of the window; "Well, Margie?"

"Stop! stop!" cried Trixie, "let us guess it. Let me see, Margie—Robert has got an appointment."

A momentary shadow fell over Margie's face as she shook her head, "Out, Trixie!"

"Well, do let us think—who—what—where? Jim! That's it! Jim has got promotion, and is going to make his fortune in no time!"

"Better still," said Margie. Trixie looked provoked.

"Oh, I hate guessing. I cannot think of anything! Tell us, Margie, quick."

Marjory looked up at Aunt Helen, and a bright smile lit up her whole face.

"What do you say to my news, auntie? Jim has got six months' holiday, and is coming home."

"Hurrah!" shouted Trixie. "Jim! dear old Jim! I am so glad. Jim coming home—that is fun!"

"Thank God!" exclaimed Miss Helen. "I shall be well pleased indeed to see his face again in this world."

"That *is* good news!" continued Trixie. "And when will he arrive? Soon, Margie, will it be soon?"

"About the middle of the summer, I fancy," said Margie. "He has not been well, and that is the only bad part of it. They have given him six months, and he was to start almost immediately."

"Oh, I am so glad, dear old Jim!"

"It was good of you to come out and tell us," said Aunt Helen.

"I ran off at once," replied Margie. "I knew you would be pleased to hear, so I thought I would come and spend the morning with you, and Robert is to fetch me home in the afternoon."

"Jim," began Trixie again, "it is the very nicest news—Jim coming home. What fun! Oh! haymakings, and Christmas-trees, and Halloweens. How good he used to be at them! How I wish we were all young again!" And Trixie sighed, as if life were already of the past.

And Aunt Helen looked up at her, and smiled a strange sweet smile; the young, young life was so fair to her, like a flower-blossom, from which the morning dew had not yet been brushed away.

Meantime, a footstep was heard treading the lobby-floor, the parlour-door opened, and Colonel O'Neil came in.

Trixie sprung to him, to be the first to give the tidings.

"News, papa!" she exclaimed, "do you not like a bit of news?"

He smiled down upon her. The child

had been little more than a trouble to him, but the girl, in her beautiful, bursting youth, was beginning to be some interest in his selfish life.

"News!" he said. "Of course I do. What is it, Trix, and who brought it?"

"Margie; and I think she ought to tell it; but may I—may I tell papa, Margie?"

Marjory answered with a happy laugh in her eyes, and Trixie came out with the information.

"Jim is coming home, papa! Is not that delightful?"

"Ah!" said Colonel O'Neil. He did not seem so eagerly excited as she was. "I am very glad to hear it. What a comfort for his mother!"

"We shall all welcome him warmly," said Aunt Helen.

"Of course we shall! Why, Jim was paterfamilias, commander-in-chief, counsellor in general, to the tribes of the Lindsays and O'Neils through all the years of his venerated boyhood," said Trixie. "We shall welcome him with enthusiasm."

"So we shall," replied her father. "But now," he went on as if full of another subject, "I have got my news too!"

"More!" exclaimed Trixie.

"Well, it is not exactly family intelligence; but it concerns you a little bit, Miss Trix."

"Out with it, papa, out with it. Do not keep me waiting."

"Well, it is only that I have got you an invitation."

"Oh!" exclaimed Trixie in a tone of disappointment, "is that all? One of your stupid old people at the Club going to give a dinner."

"Not that this time, Trix. I met an old friend of the boys at the club to-day,—and of Jim's too, Marjory, by-the-bye,—young Hamilton of the Craig. He was in town with his uncle, Lord Clarenleigh, and he tells me he is down on leave; and Lady Marian is going to have a regular turn-out for his amusement, and he offered to send an invitation for me and you. He is a fine, frank, soldierly fellow," continued the Colonel.

"Of course I said we should be glad to go; so there is a bit of gaiety in prospect for you, Miss Trix."

"I heard," said Aunt Helen, "that Lady Marian had returned to the Craig."

"Yes; she has finished putting the French polish on those two elder daughters of hers, and the younger ones do not want it yet; so she has come home for a time. They say the boy has been going the pace in the Guards, so I suppose the uncle has come down to look after him a bit. I wonder what they are thinking of doing with him, for Clarenleigh pumped me for information about the county interests. There is an election looming, I fancy, and perhaps the old peer has the notion of taking the boy out of the army, and of putting him up. There would be no good in that, however."

"Why not?" asked Aunt Helen. "Hamilton of the Craig should have as good a chance of being returned for the county as any other man. I am sure no one is satisfied with the present member."

"Not with Ellsley," said the Colonel.

"He is sure to be shelved. Mackinnon is safe enough ; but if an election comes on at present, Craig would have no chance against another man I know."

"And who is that?" said Aunt Helen.

"Andrew Forde, the Clyde ship-builder ; they say he is going to stand. He is a millionaire, and young Craig would do well not to set up his old landed interests against the weight of the builder's purse. It would be throwing money away."

Miss Helen's eyes flashed indignantly.

"I hope you are wrong, Colonel O'Neil," she said ; "I hope you are wrong. Family pride is strong enough in Scotland still, I trust, to return a young laird of Craig for his county against any influence of Glasgow gold."

Colonel O'Neil shrugged his shoulders incredulously, and Miss Helen frowned. She was a stern Tory, and did not like this sort of thing. She would have told you, if you had asked her privately, that the country was going in anything but the right direction. Lairds did not live decently at home

upon their properties, and new money was buying them out on every side. She had a vague but confirmed opinion that Ireland was somehow to blame for it all, and when politics came on the tapis she frowned more severely than ever at Colonel O'Neil. However, it was settled that the invitation should be accepted, if it came.

"It was only right and proper," Miss Helen said, "if Lady Marian invited them, that Trixie and her father should do their part in friendliness and go."

That question, and the return of Jim, were alternately the subjects of discussion during all that day, until, as the afternoon shadows began to grow longer across the lawn, some one else appeared, coming along the pathway below the field.

"There is Robert," said Margie, taking up her bonnet. "I must go to him; he said he would wait for me down there."

"Will he not come up to the house?" said Miss Helen. "He might come in, surely, and have a cup of tea."

"I think he is too busy, auntie; perhaps

he has not time. I shall run down to him.
Good-bye."

She stooped and kissed the old lady, and Aunt Helen held her hands, and looked a little sadly into her face.

"Go to him, then, dear," she said. "God help you both, and give you strength and patience."

There was a tear gathering in Margie's eye, but she drew her hand from Aunt Helen and brushed it hastily away. She turned into the garden, nodded her farewell to Trixie, and walked quickly away over the lawn towards the fields.

Robert leant upon the stile, and waited for her.

"Well?" he said as she came up to him. She did not cross at once, but leant upon the stile opposite to him, and looked with eager tenderness into his face.

"Well, Robert?"

He shook his head gloomily.

"Will you come over?" he answered, and he held out his hand to assist her.

She went across to him, and then slid her

hand within his arm, and they walked along some paces together in silence. She knew all he had to say.

"It is no use," he began presently; "I have failed again."

"They will not take the essay, Robert?"

"They will have nothing to say to it. Half of it has been said before, they tell me, and the other half is too deep for their kind of public. It is no good, Margie; I do not think I shall try again."

"Robert!"

"Oh, I'll grind on, you know, at this miserable penny-a-lining, and get my crust, but it is no use speaking to people who will not hear, and no use writing down ideas when none will read them; and yet I could swear there are pages in that essay that want nothing but a name to give them power."

"Never mind, dear. When you have made the name, Robert, they will be glad to listen to *all* you say to them."

"I took my work on the classics along with me to the editor, and he told

me I was wasting my time. He says the market is overloaded already with stuff, as he calls it, of this kind. It is hard, Margie, when you think you have ideas of your own, to be nailed down to the mere reporting and parroting of other people's."

"We should be thankful, Robert, that you have work such as it is, dear."

"Thankful for what?" he exclaimed. "Thankful for nothing! What is it all to come to? Here we are waiting, Margie, and Jim coming home; and I not a step nearer winning you than when he went away. What am I to say to him?"

"You were doing very well in the *News*, Robert dear, till——"

"Finish your sentence, Margie—till I quarrelled with the editor and my bread and butter! Yes, fool that he was, he would not let me tell the public my mind, and I was not going to say to them what was *not* my mind."

"What will you do now?"

"I know what *you* must do, Margie,"

he said, suddenly facing round upon her in the pathway.

“What, dear?” She looked up at him surprised.

“You must give me up. Before Jim comes home we must end this. Just forget me, Margie, forget me, and—I will go!”

He folded his arms, and looked down upon her, the great knots on his forehead contracted with an expression of intense pain.

“I am a worthless fellow, and I had better go. You had best forget me, dear—best give me up.”

He kept repeating the sentence, and she did not answer him at once. She had put up her hands, resting on his folded arms, and her soft eyes looked yearningly and pityingly into his dark face. Then she just shook her head gently.

“It is of no use, Robert; you need not say things like that. I said I would wait for you, and you might go, dear, but I would just be waiting still.”

He folded his arms round her, and gathered

her quiet strength unto himself; drew courage afresh from the soft touch of her lips, and power into his own weakness, from her hope and her confidence, again.

And then they went on, once more, their way together.

CHAPTER III.

THE CRAIG.

THERE was a houseful at the Craig. Lord Clarenleigh was staying there, as Colonel O'Neil had said, and Godfrey was at home on leave. And Lady Marian had brought back her bevy of daughters from a foreign tour, and was purposing the entertainment of the county in honour of her son.

On the afternoon of the same day that Colonel O'Neil had met the uncle and nephew at the club in Edinburgh, Godfrey lay at full length on the lawn, outside the window of his mother's drawing-room. Near him, curled up on the grass, sat two little sisters, girls of the awkward age of half-length petticoats and long straggling hair.

At a short distance off sat an elderly governess, mounting an observant guard.

The two other sisters, Edith and Helen, were already introduced in the world; but these two, — “Bussy” and “Gussy,” — Godfrey’s special companions, were still within the confines of durance vile for several long years to come. They were twins; Buss was his favourite, and Goffy trusted *her* with his secrets. She was affectionate, good-humoured, and truthful, and he was very fond of her.

Gussy was the best girl of the two, in the stern eyes of authority. She got much seldomer into scrapes, and when she did, she got out of them much more easily. But Godfrey thought her “a bit of a sneak.” She had told tales on him sometimes, when he was younger, and often looked on and repeated a bit of mischief when they least suspected it. He was suspicious of Guss.

Lady Marian had brought up her daughters with an immense deal of theory, a great deal of discipline, and some want of simplicity and affection. They had had a dull

and methodical youth, a cut-and-dry education, and they were consequently rather level-minded girls. The elder ones thought by rule, spoke on principle, and acted with stiffness and constraint.

Helen had developed into a proud, indifferent edition of her mother, in character and looks. Edith was inert and obedient, never gave an opinion, and never had one. They had lived a dull routine life, and the one bit of free, glorious, buoyant vitality that had come bursting in among them, from time to time, was their brother Goff.

Like a firebrand thrown into a stack of fuel he had always come, lighting them all up for the moment into merriment and life, bringing fun and joyousness among them, with a delightful feeling of a constant row going on, up and down-stairs, in the house, in the gardens, in the school-room, and all over the place.

He lay laughing now at Bussy's solemn account of the people expected for the approaching festivities at the Craig. It was his first visit there since he had come of

age, and there was to be a tenants' dinner and a ball.

Everybody was coming; there were to be magnates of the neighbourhood from far and near. There were country respectabilities, and town authorities.

"Such lots of people," Bussy said, "and such a big dinner in the hall; and mamma said Goff would have to make a speech."

"I don't think that is very likely," he exclaimed. "But I say, Bussy, you have enumerated enough of people, certainly; but it does not seem to me that there is a young one in the whole lot."

"Oh, mamma says," replied Buss, "we are enough young people in the house. Only Lady Alice Seton is coming; she is young."

"And lovely!" added Godfrey sarcastically. "Oh, bother it all!" And he threw back his head again, and half closed his eyes, and let them roam idly over the sunlit trees and undulating turf of his park, stretching away beyond the gardens.

It was a beautiful old place. A handsome, massive house, with a broad frontage, and

with wings stretching on each side. It had sloping lawns, and rich woods and pasture lands, and a beautiful garden, highly kept up by Lady Marian.

Within, the house was roomy and luxurious. There was a huge vaulted entrance-hall, a broad double staircase, one large drawing-room, and several smaller ones. There was the school-room and the girls' apartments up-stairs in one wing, and in the other were Godfrey's smoking-room, billiard-room, his own bedroom, and several he reserved near him for his special friends. Lady Marian's rooms, and those used for state visitors, were in the main upper story of the house.

"Don't *you* hate all this to-do, Bussy?" asked Goff again.

"Well, no, I think I like all the people to come; and I know I shall like to hear you make a speech."

"You will not do that in a hurry. Heigho! that sort of thing is all very well, Buss, but it is a confounded bore. I'm glad I've got some fellows coming down;

they will help me through. I say, who goes there?"

He was too lazy to raise his head, but could just see some one passing towards the garden.

"It is Helen," said Gussy.

"Oh, I say, you sing out to her, and ask her where the mother is. I want to speak about these invitations and things."

"Mamma is just coming out," said Guss. "She is coming here, Goffy, with Uncle Clarenleigh."

"Tant mieux !" said Godfrey ; "then I need not get up."

Lady Marian approached them. She was a prim-featured, tall woman, with a cold proud look in her eyes. She had been very handsome, and she was still—as she had ever been—unrelentingly domineering.

"Little girls," she said, as she approached the group on the grass, "is not all this very idle? Miss Kerr, is there nothing to be done this long afternoon?"

"The lessons are finished,"—began the governess, but Godfrey interrupted her.

"Now, mother, I've just come out here to make them idle. Do just leave them with me for a bit. They're doing no harm, and if they do, *I'll* pitch into them. Let them alone, mother."

He wheeled himself round on his elbow and glanced up at her, and Lady Marian's face relented. She never contradicted her son in little things,—in large ones, she hoped to make him obey her.

"Incorrigible boy," she said, "you idle away all your own time, and make your sisters idle as well."

"Lucky they don't see more of me then!" he answered, laughing. "Uncle, have you been telling my mother of our prospective canvassing to-day?"

"I have been telling her that I have been making inquiries,—in a general way only, you know, and I do not see why success should not be achieved with a little time and perseverance."

"Let it be as long a time as possible then," said Godfrey, "for I don't want to leave the old Fusiliers just yet. I would

rather be patched up in them again, than have the best seat in the House of Commons."

"But the patching up, as you call it," replied Lord Clarenleigh, "is not a process one may be inclined to repeat, without a due motive."

"No," said Goff, "it is no go, I suppose, so we shall have to do the canvass; and as a step, I met dear old Jim Lindsay's uncle to-day, mother, and I said you would send an invitation for him and for his daughter, to stay over the tenth. I remember Trixie was a jolly little thing."

"His daughter!" exclaimed Lady Marian, in a tone of disgust. "Have we not girls enough here already, Godfrey? I do not mind asking the Colonel, but why have the daughter too? The very thing I wished to avoid!" she thought to herself with horror.

"Well, I am sure I do not care about the girl, only I did say her as well, so I suppose we must ask her now. As well have some young ones, you know, mother. Harvard is coming, and Lethbridge, and Aleyne; and

as the latter gentleman belongs to the A. D. C., which, being translated, is the Amateur Dramatic Club, I should think it is likely he will get up some fun, so you may as well have a young lady or two."

Lady Marian looked impatient, and turned from him. Lord Clarenleigh joined her, and they walked towards the garden together.

* * * * *

The next day, Godfrey sat looking bright and buoyant as usual at the luncheon-table. The sisters lined each side, and at the opposite end, by their mother, sat Lord Clarenleigh.

"It is a splendid afternoon, uncle," said Goff, "will you let me drive you into town with the chestnuts. I think I have a thing or two to do."

"Willingly," replied his uncle. "You are not going to drive?" he added, turning to his sister.

"No," said Lady Marian, "certainly not to-day. It would be a good arrangement if Godfrey takes you."

"Very well, decided then," said Godfrey,

and he rose to ring the bell. "And by-the-bye, mother, if you will write that note for the O'Neils, we can drop it as we pass the lodge."

"I think I should like to consider it," she answered hesitatingly.

"Very good," replied her son, "it is not worth differing about, only I do not want the old Colonel to be thinking all to-day that I have forgotten my promise. Are you ready, uncle?"

The chestnuts were high-bred and spirited, and they went spanking along, Godfrey enjoying the driving of them, sitting high up in his mail phaeton, his handsome face lit up with genuine young animal spirits, his fair hair blowing back from his temples, his eyes dancing with fun.

He was much the same sunny boy that Jim had left him, only stronger and more manly, his figure more firmly knit, and a silky fair moustache covering his upper lip.

The colour still went and came in an eager flush upon his cheeks, and the light in his eyes was still quick and excitable.

He chattered incessantly to his uncle as they drove along, and the uncle listened with apparent sympathy.

Lord Clarenleigh was really interested in this young ward of his, and sincerely anxious to make him go through the world in a straight line.

He had the same love of management and red-tapeism, so strongly developed in Lady Marian. Together, they had made up their minds on the line they considered "the straight one" for young Hamilton, and together they purposed to propel him along it.

"Pluck up the wild oats by the roots," seemed the first idea. "Get him out of the army, get him into Parliament, and above all, get him married to—some money, and some rank."

That was the sort of thing it behoved Hamilton of the Craig, the grandson of a Clarenleigh, the cousin of many dukedoms, to do, and it was Lord Clarenleigh's duty, as a guardian, to see that he did it.

He had given them a good deal of trouble already.

When, four years ago, he left Eton, they had scarcely known what to do with him. He had left laden with athletic honours ; he had been stroke oar of the winning boat for several consecutive fourths of June ; he had played on the winning side at Lord's for years. He had won silver oars enough to row a Liliputian fleet, and silver racing cups innumerable, but he was "nowhere" in the schools.

He never opened a book, if he could help it ; and gathered his intelligence, of which he had plenty, from sources unknown.

He was too young for Parliament, unfit for Diplomacy, so the episode in the Guards had to be.

Now, his guardian thought, it might be concluded. Enough money was scattered, enough wild oats were sown, and now, if Godfrey would go into Parliament, marry to please them, and, as they expressed it, "settle down," Lord Clarenleigh was ready to clear off that long dismal list of liabilities and set him agoing, with his income free.

"Not enough to live upon, my boy, in these days, however," he kept impressing upon him; "not enough to keep a dog in your position, in civilised life. You must marry money, Godfrey; you must marry money."

Godfrey had heard this injunction so frequently, that it had got into his brain somehow, jumbled up with the answers to the Catechism, and other fixed religious principles, instilled in his early youth; and he had drawn a picture of his future spouse for Bussy, one day,—a beautiful creature, surrounded with money-bags, with rows of golden sovereigns hanging on her neck, and as ornaments in her ears and nose.

"Oh yes," he always answered solemnly, thinking often of anything else in the world, "it is a *sine quâ non*, uncle, no doubt of it! a *sine quâ non*."

Lord Clarenleigh had profited by the occasion to repeat these injunctions as they drove into Edinburgh now, and Goff was just making his usual reply, when suddenly he brought his chestnuts to a full stop on their

haunches, and threw the reins into his uncle's hands.

"Hold them a minute," he exclaimed in his impetuous way. "There is Colonel O'Neil at the lodge gate. I will just tell him I have not forgotten about the invitation, and that my mother will send it down this evening," and out he jumped.

Colonel O'Neil was standing under the elm-tree, close by the gate, dressed trimly cap-à-pie for his afternoon two miles walk into Edinburgh.

He was lighting his cigar, and lingering as he lit it, in conversation with Trixie, who, in her garden hat and gloves, had wandered down to the road with him, so far on his way.

Godfrey sprang to the ground, almost at their feet, and Colonel O'Neil held out his hand to him, raised his hat to Lord Clarenleigh, and then turned towards his daughter.

"I do not think we need an introduction," exclaimed Godfrey hurriedly, and then he paused; and he opened his eyes

very wide indeed, as he looked boldly down into her face.

How lovely she seemed to him, her fresh, joyous beauty coming suddenly upon him, her radiant eyes looking straight up into his !

He became suddenly conscious that he had told his mother, he "was indifferent whether the invitation included Trixie or not," and a horror seized him lest she should take him at his word.

He held Trixie's hand for a moment, then dropped it again, and half turned to her father, but his eyes still lingered on her face. The colour was deepening there in a warm, beautiful blush under his fixed and eager gaze.

"We are old acquaintances," he said to her, speaking slowly now in his surprise.

"Yes; how long it is since we have met !"

"It is. I should not have known you, Miss O'Neil."

"I should have known you, Captain Hamilton."

"Should you? Well, I hope I shall soon

renew all our old acquaintance. My mother will send your invitation down this evening, Colonel. We shall hope to see you in a day or two, and you must stay over the tenth."

"I shall be delighted to bring my daughter," replied Colonel O'Neil.

"That's right,—I must hurry off now, my uncle is waiting. Are you going into town? I wish I could give you a lift."

"Don't speak of it! I enjoy the walk. It is my daily exercise; in for the rubber, you know, at the Club."

"Au revoir then!" and Goff had Trixie's fingers for a moment within his own again.

"By Jove!" he murmured to himself, as he walked back to the carriage; and the expression seemed to condense his admiration of Trixie into a word.

He scrambled into his seat again, and they rolled on. He glanced back once as he raised his hat to her, and then he subsided into a low absent whistling, while Lord Clarenleigh renewed his lecture on "le mariage de convenance."

"A good sensible girl, Godfrey, with a

little money, and a position of her own. Not too young, you know, character well formed, sound principles, good connections, that is the sort of thing you want."

So it went ringing on in Godfrey's ears as he drove to town, he dreaming the while of the momentary flash of those eyes into his, and recalling the quiver of feeling they had shot through his strong frame.

He had one more battle for the invitation that evening, then he possessed himself of it, and strode straight away, the two miles short cut, across the woods and farm, that separated the Craig from the Grange. He left it in the safe charge of the lodge-keeper, to be sent up in the morning, and came back, feeling happier, to the Craig.

CHAPTER IV.

"FAIR IS THE FUTURE'S SHADOWY GRACE."

Two days later, Godfrey was standing impatient on his own doorstep, while a carriage he had seen from the window came slowly up the approach.

Bussy was close beside him, while Guss peeped somewhere behind the door; both consumed with curiosity at the approach of more visitors, and both deaf to the calls of Miss Kerr, from the head of the staircase in their wing.

"Goffy, I may stay, mayn't I?" whispered Buss.

"Of course you may."

"And you will say, 'beg pardon' to Miss Kerr?"

"Never fear, I'll go up and bully her

presently. You keep close to me, it's all right. Here they are." And the old Sea Grange carriage swept up to the door.

"How do you do, Colonel O'Neil?" he said as the Colonel sprang to the ground. "How are you, Miss O'Neil? Will you allow me,—that's it."

Trixie was looking very pretty, with a brighter colour than usual in her cheeks, and a shy glance in her eyes. This sort of thing was all very new to her. She was feeling a little frightened, and wondering privately to herself whether "life was going to begin."

He walked by her side up the steps, and into the hall.

"Will you come into the drawing-room to my mother? She and the other people are all in here," he continued, turning towards a door at his left.

"I am coming," shouted Colonel O'Neil, from among his wraps and packages at the entrance. "Don't wait for me, I have a word to say to the coachman."

"Shall we go in?" asked Godfrey. His

hand was on the handle of the door, he turned towards her. She was shrinking back a little, and she looked suddenly up at him. Their eyes met, and he paused.

"I am dreadfully frightened," said Trixie. "Shall we not wait for papa?"

Godfrey laughed, then he became suddenly grave again.

"I hope you will never be frightened here," he said, "at all events, as long as I am master in this house."

"Oh," she answered, laughing at his solemnity, "I know no one is going to hurt me, only I hate going into a room full of people I do not know. Wait a moment, I shall do it directly."

He waited, and looked at her. Then an idea came into his head.

"Why, Bussy shall go in with you," he exclaimed. "Here, Buss, this is Miss O'Neil, and Miss O'Neil," he added confidentially, "this is number *four*, the youngest twin!"

"Oh! Goffy, what a shame! you know I am just the same age as Gusta; and

please, Miss O'Neil," pleaded Bussy, "my name is Celandine, only Goffy will call me Buss."

"And why do I do it, most erudite of juveniles?"

"Augusta is called Gussy, and you call me Bussy because it rhymes, Goff," she replied obediently.

"And a very good reason too. But now, Miss Celandine Hamilton, will you conduct Miss O'Neil and me into the drawing-room?"

"Oh, Goffy, you said you would come and beg pardon of Miss Kerr."

"So I will; but wait a bit. Miss O'Neil, shall we go into the drawing-room under her protection?"

"Oh yes," laughed Trixie, "I do not think I feel afraid now; besides, here is papa."

"Bussy, *isn't* she lovely?"

Godfrey had "begged pardon" from Miss Kerr, and was seated at school-room tea, now Bussy perched upon the arm of his big chair, and Guss looking on as usual.

Buss nodded. "She is beautiful, Goffy, and I heard mamma say so to Lady Cairne."

"And I heard mamma say," interrupted Gussy, "I heard her say she had no doubt she was a designing minx."

"What!" shouted Godfrey, enraged.

"Augusta, your tongue is offensive," cried Miss Kerr from the tea-tray. "I cannot have you repeating your mamma's sayings in that kind of way."

"She had just better try it on again," cried Godfrey, glowering at her in excitement.

"Well," grumbled Augusta, with her mouth full of bread and butter, "Buss told you what mamma said; why may not I? Besides, mamma did say it; and she said, besides, that she would take care Goffy didn't——"

"Hush-sh-sh!" remonstrated Miss Kerr, with severe countenance and uplifted finger.

"Go on!" shouted Goff, "I *will* hear!"

"Godfrey, I will turn you out of my school-room. Here, have some tea, you tiresome boy, encouraging insubordination in

my own territory ; I told Augusta she was to say no more."

"I'll get it out of her some other time," said Goff, with a menacing shake of his head, "when you are not in the way to shut her up, Miss Kerr."

He had recovered his good humour again, and turned his laughing eyes on the old governess.

She had superintended his education, taught him his letters, had been able to keep him in order once, and now, in return, he spent his idle hours at home in revolutionising her school-room, and in tyrannizing over *her*.

For old Miss Kerr had sense enough to realise that there may be methodical stagnations in young lives, all the better for volcanic and subverting influences from time to time ; so while Godfrey was at home, and Lady Marian was not present, she never resisted the revolution or the tyranny.

"Miss Kerr," he began again presently, "I am going to take Bussy out to the garden with me."

"That you certainly cannot do, Godfrey. Celandine ran about with you the whole afternoon, and she has all the lessons she left undone to learn when tea is over."

"But she must come. I have a very particular message she must do for me, and lessons must retire into comparative insignificance."

"I cannot allow it, Godfrey."

"Buss, do you want to come, or do you not?" he continued peremptorily.

Bussy glanced at Miss Kerr, to see how far the refusal was serious and intended.

"Of course I want to go, Goff."

"Well, you open that door, and run very quick to the end of the passage, and leave me to fight the battle here."

Buss had learnt by experience that he could fight his battle, so, with one naughty look at old Miss Kerr, who pretended not to see it, she opened the door very quietly, and ran along the passage in obedience to Goff's command.

"What is to become of my authority?"

I am very near dressing-time. Please
be quick. I am very quick in the
end of the exercise.

She caught his hand, and ran along pant-
ing by his side.

"Am I going too quick for you?"
"No, no. Goffy, I know what you are
going to do."

"No, you don't."

He had stopped before the greenhouse, and turned towards her, either the quick run, or the child's words, making the colour mount to his forehead.

"Yes, I do. You are going to pick flowers, and——"

"Come along in," he said hastily, and he opened the greenhouse door. He looked eagerly round for a few moments, and paused.

Suddenly Bussy exclaimed, "Here, Godfrey, would not this do be-autifully?"

It was a group of snow-white lilies she pointed to, nestling amid a background of heath and fern.

"Capital!" he said. "Take care, I'll gather them." And he broke off two from the green stems, and then chose some bits of long feathery fern.

"There, I think that's about the thing. Now, Bussy, you run with them as fast as you can go, only carry them very carefully, and just knock at Miss O'Neil's door. You know her room, don't you? and hand them in. Do not say a single word about any-

body, but just give them to her, and come back and tell me how she looked."

Godfrey had to take Lady Cairne to dinner, and on his other side sat her daughter, Lady Alice Seton.

Far down the table he could see Trixie, with the white lilies in her hair, her bright face turned often away from him to laugh at some sally of his friends Lethbridge and Aleyne, who sat one on each side.

Trixie's sparkle and merriment was coming out through her shyness in the pleasant influences that surrounded her. The frank expression of admiration that met her in the young faces on each side were singularly novel and pleasing. And there was no fire or power in those eyes as there was in Godfrey's; their glance brought no flush of colour to her cheek, and she could laugh carelessly back to them again.

She was enjoying it all, and looked as if she did, and Goff felt that *he* did not like it. He was sulky and silent, and Lady

Cairne said afterwards "she was disappointed to find Captain Hamilton such a very stupid young man."

In the drawing-room Trixie found it shy work again. Lady Marian and her elder daughters talked exclusively to the Cairnes, with whom they had the freemasonry of a London acquaintance, and Trixie felt relieved when Buss, in all the glory of a stiff, clean muslin and a rose-coloured sash, came and nestled close up to her on the sofa, and Gussy, in another edition of sash and muslin, came and seated herself demurely on the other side.

When Bussy and Guss were not quarrelling they mechanically appeared to do the same thing.

"Did you like your flowers?" whispered Bussy.

"Very much," said Trixie; "you see I have put them in my hair. It was very nice of you to bring them to me. Did you gather them for me yourself?"

Bussy reddened; she could not tell a fib, and yet she had an instinctive notion of

honour that forbade her revealing what she thought Godfrey had not meant to be known.

"I must not tell," she said, shaking her head solemnly. Trixie laughed, and looked surprised.

"What is the mystery?" she said.

But Bussy looked as if no torture of the Inquisition could unseal her lips. Guss looked triumphant and exclaimed—

"I know, and I'll tell!"

"Don't!" pleaded Bussy.

"I will; I guessed and I told mamma, and mamma said——"

"Guss, don't," cried Bussy, "he doesn't want us to, I *know* he doesn't!"

Trixie looked from one child to the other in bewilderment, but before either could speak again the door was thrown open, the gentlemen trouped into the room, and the poor little white muslins had scarcely a moment to stare with curiosity at the newcomers when they were marshalled to bed.

Captain Lethbridge and Mr. Aleyne—the latter the hero of the A.D.C.—made straight for the vicinity of their dinner companion,

and young Lord Harvard loitered up the room, contemplating the company in general before deciding where to come to anchor.

Lord Clarenleigh walked up to Lady Cairne, and Lady Marian, glancing towards her son, approached Alice Seton and requested her to play or sing.

Godfrey had paused in the doorway, and was looking about him. There was a restless light in his eyes, and he returned his mother's glance with an expression of rebellion and impatience.

His gaze fastened upon the group at the sofa, and rested there for some moments, with a look coming over his face such as Jim Lindsay had seen upon it when he and Goff had had that last talk together at the stile—the look that had recalled the old Scotch ballad to Jim's mind—a look of kindling excitability of feeling, of restless impatience, of chafing under some resistance to his impulsive will.

Godfrey Hamilton had looked into many pretty faces before now, had smiled down on them, and fancied himself in love. But his

feeling of this evening was something different. Trixie's face and Trixie's bright radiant glance sent a thrill of pleasure, and a dancing sense of enjoyment through every pulse as he looked at her. He hated every one else who approached her, who dared to admire her, or any one with whom she seemed pleased for one moment. He wanted her all for himself.

Not that he included any ideas of matrimony in his thoughts of her, for that had become to him a prosaic, business kind of thought, associated with money and debts and troubles, and dwelt in his mind as a sort of solemn haven to which he might betake himself as a last refuge when it behoved him to "settle down;" as a process with which his mother and Lord Clarenleigh had much more to do than he. At present he only thought of those bright eyes and carnation lips, and of wooing them and loving them, and having all their love for his own.

He ought to have connected the two ideas, but—he did not.

He walked straight up to the sofa now, passing Lady Alice and his mother unblushingly on the way, and in one moment he had somehow conveyed to Aleyne the idea that he wanted his place, who, not being in love himself, and forming the suspicion at a glance that Godfrey was approaching that catastrophe, vacated it like a friend.

"You have had the twins presented to you, I see," Godfrey said as he slipped into the corner by her side; "we are a good lot of us, you see."

"So are we," replied Trixie.

"Are you? Of course, yes; there were the boys. They are a good deal younger than I am, I remember, but they must be getting big fellows now."

"Oh yes; Greville is just passing for the army, and Percy has been in the navy these three years," said Trixie. "Rupert and Albert are the only ones at home. I do not know exactly what is to be done with them. I suppose they must emigrate by-and-by, poor fellows."

"It is awfully difficult to know what to

do with boys in this country, certainly," said Goff solemnly. "Girls are a much easier business; I always think it is lucky there are not more of *me*!"

"I do not know that girls are so easy, either," said Trixie.

"Well, perhaps not, after a certain point. Girls are a nuisance when you come to the disposable age too. Look at my mother, for instance, what a rage she is in at this moment, because there is Helen, who ought to know better, flirting with the High Church curate of St. Ives. Do look at her."

"Oh, Captain Hamilton!" exclaimed Trixie.

Lady Marian looked far too frigid for rage, and Helen too dignified to suggest flirtation.

"It is true though," he said; and so it was.

Lady Marian was extremely annoyed this evening, all her arrangements were going wrong.

There was, in truth, Helen, who in all other matters held the same social principles

as her mother, indulging in that latent weakness, of which Lady Marian already suspected her, for that handsome penniless curate of St. Ives.

There was Godfrey *tête-a-tête* with Miss O'Neil, and both Captain Lethbridge and Mr. Aleyne beaten off the field at the sofa, and dangling at Lady Alice's chair.

There was only one bright spot on that horizon,—Lord Harvard had found a place near Edith ; and Lord Harvard was a great “ parti.”

“ Very good,—no knowing !” thought Lady Marian to herself, as consolation under other difficulties. “ There is no knowing what these things may come to, and Edith *could* be depended on to conduct her own affairs. She always did (on proper occasions) make herself nice !”

Her mother had hopes of *her* ! How different from Godfrey,—his matrimonial prospects were the present urgent concern.

“ This sort of thing must be stopped,” thought Lady Marian.

Lady Alice was again begged to play, and though the two other gentlemen accompanied her to the piano, Lady Marian took the opportunity of uprooting Goff.

"My darling boy," she said, sailing up to him with a smile, "I am sure Miss O'Neil will excuse you, but Lady Alice is going to sing, and the candles have been put out, will you light them again?"

"Bother!" said Godfrey.

"My dearest boy," he looked up at her, but he did not move.

"Confound Lady Alice!" he said solemnly.

"The candles, dear," said Lady Marian, sweetly disregarding the vituperation.

Godfrey sprang to his feet, he walked straight across the room to the fireplace, lighted a long match, and stalked across to the piano.

There he lit the two candles with a perfectly grave countenance, said not a word to the group assembled round them, and walked straight back again to the sofa and to his place.

But Lady Marian had taken it.

Godfrey perched himself upon the arm.

"I know you are so fond of this song, dear boy," she said, as the music began.

Godfrey folded his arms and said nothing, he looked straight before him with a scowl.

Lady Marian kept time to the music gently with her fan, and sat on between the two young people, glancing furtively out of the corner of her eyes at both.

She thought "she saw through Trixie," as she said to herself, and felt "she must watch carefully for the next two days over her impulsive, strong-headed boy."

She had him in hand, with all his recklessness, and she knew it, but,—as *he* was mentally expressing it,—"she would have to get up very early to keep her eyes upon him now."

Lady Marian turned to Trixie, when the song was over, and said blandly,

"Do you not sing or play, Miss O'Neil?"

"Neither," said Trixie; "at all events, not well enough to perform before a public audience."

"Ah!" said Lady Marian, with the slightest possible degree of the supercilious in her tone, "young ladies in these days *are* generally brought up to do something in that way."

"I am afraid I am very useless," Trixie was saying, but her remark was unheard. Lord Clarenleigh approached, and asked his sister some question, and she was obliged unwillingly to rise and follow him to a seat in some other part of the room, and Godfrey got his own place again.

"I will not stand much of this sort of thing," he said angrily.

"What is the matter?" said Trixie, looking at him in surprise.

"Oh, I know very well what it is all about," he answered, "and I won't stand it, that I won't!"

"I do not the least know what you mean," she exclaimed.

"Of course you don't, how should you?" he replied. "The idea of your being useless!"

"Well, do you know, I think I am. I

cannot do drawing-room things, like your sisters and Lady Alice, because Aunt Helen did not bring me up to do them. But then again, I can't do nice useful work, like Margie Lindsay. I do it, you know, but I do not do it well. Oh, I am very useless!"

"You are *not*," he said, looking full into her face, and then pausing a moment. "Are flowers useless—and birds useless—and sunshine, and everything beautiful and bright?"

He turned his eyes, kindling and fervent, upon her, and the colour rushed over her face again. Her eyes drooped beneath his gaze, and the long dark lashes fell upon her cheek.

"You beautiful child!"—the words rose within him, and almost broke from his lips, but he restrained them.

"Tell me about the Lindsays," he said instead.

"Oh, don't you know?" said Trixie. "Jim is coming home."

"Jim! that is jolly! I am very glad! And how are the others—Marjory, and

that funny clever fellow, Deane, and Jim's mother—how are they all?"

"Quite well," said Trixie.

"And is Deane doing any good yet?"

"I am afraid not," she answered. "He is very clever, and is always working away; but he does not seem to do much, somehow."

"And Jim's sister is still engaged to him?"

"Oh yes, she would not give him up for anything."

"Fancy! And dear old Jim is coming home. Well, I shall go and see them all, and Miss Helen too."

"Do," said Trixie; "Aunt Helen will be delighted to see you."

"Will she? that is capital! May I come the day after you go home? Hang it! here's my mother again; we must dissolve. Halloo, Aleyne, come here and tell us all about your last theatricals."

He rose suddenly, Lady Marian joined them, and the party fell into groups of fours and threes.

"It is very absurd," thought Godfrey to himself, over his pipe that night, "very absurd of my mother, filling this house with shoals of stupid people from London, and from every corner of the world, when there is lots of jolly society all close about. I shall take up immensely with the Sea Grange party, that I will. And I'll look up Jim Lindsay as soon as he comes home, and make up my old friendship with him again. And it's just what I ought to do, I am sure; he's the son of my father's oldest friend.

"What a fool a fellow is, to go knocking about in London, in the Guards and that sort of thing, instead of living in his own country and on his own place! I shall turn over a new leaf, I will.

"What a dear, beautiful little thing that is! And she wore the flowers, too! I shall go and get her some more, first thing in the morning!"

CHAPTER V.

"WHEN WE WERE YOUNG."

BREAKFAST at the Craig was a very late affair, and Trixie, accustomed to Aunt Helen's primitive hours, was down long before any one else thought of appearing.

She heard the little girls' voices on the lawn, and found her way to the garden-room; so called from the low-sashed, old-fashioned window looking upon Lady Marian's special parterre of flowers, and with a view far over the lawn towards the larger garden.

Trixie stood at the window and looked out, admiring the rich green slopes, the beds gay with spring flowers in the foreground, the distant view over the valley, and the soft hilly uplands beyond.

The two girls and their governess had

the garden to themselves, and Trixie ventured to open the window, and was just going to call a "Good morning" to Bussy, when, first a huge dog bounded out from the shrubbery, and then a tall figure came following him, sauntering indolently from a sidewalk on to the grass.

He caught sight of Trixie at the window, and came towards her at once, stopping a moment to say "Good morning" to Miss Kerr, and nodding to the two little girls. He had them in far too good training to allow of their venturing to follow him without an invitation; so he proceeded on towards the window alone.

"Good morning, Miss O'Neil." He had a fresh-gathered rose in his hand, and he was plucking the thorns from the stem as he approached her.

"Good morning, Captain Hamilton."

"You are early for a young lady," he went on.

"Do you call this early?" laughed Trixie. "Why, Aunt Helen has finished breakfast long ago."

"Well, I do not know; no one gets up here except the children. I am glad you do, our tastes agree. I've been down to the fisherman's house, and round the garden already, as you see," he continued, holding up his rose.

"Yes, what a lovely colour it is!"

"The first rose of summer, 'Maiden blush,' is it not?" he said, looking up at her with a mischievous smile.

"I do not know. Is it called so?" she answered.

He was still looking straight into her face, as if it were new to him in its fresh beauty again this morning. Suddenly he held the rose up, with a bold audacious hand, and laid it against her cheek.

"It just matches," he said.

Trixie coloured a vivid crimson.

"It does not match now," he continued coolly, and took it down again. Then he bent his head, and kissed the rose softly where the leaves had touched her cheek, and glanced up at Trixie, with a smile of bright significance in his eyes.

She turned away from the window, pleased, and yet half vexed, she scarce knew why ; and immediately afterwards Lady Cairne and her daughter entered the room.

Godfrey sauntered away. He shouted to the little girls, and began a race with them, backwards and forwards over the lawn, until Lady Marian appeared, and he was summoned to breakfast.

The gentlemen spent the day in a fishing expedition, as there was, at that season, no shooting to be done. Lord Clarenleigh and Colonel O'Neil walked about the premises, and discussed the political prospects of the neighbourhood ; and Trixie had rather a dull time of it with the ladies.

They worked until luncheon, walked a little before dinner, played a little croquet, practised their respective songs, and were altogether very glad when five o'clock brought the fishing party home.

They had a tea-gathering in the round drawing-room, a cosy little room, consecrated to Helen and her friends.

Lady Marian came and chaperoned, but

there were plenty of opportunities, under the clatter of voices, for separate *tête-à-têtes*.

Godfrey—having supplied the various ladies—brought a cup of tea and a whole plateful of bread and butter, and seated himself in a corner by Trixie's side.

"Haven't had any luncheon, Miss O'Neil, so I purpose now putting dinner out of the question," he began. "You are being useful this evening, as well as—I will not say the rest; I know you do not like compliments."

"How do you know that?" she answered.

"Cannot say why. Some girls do; but I know you do not. I shall never try it on, at all events."

Then he relapsed into silence, and looked at her, and Trixie's gaze remained upon her work. She felt his eyes upon her face, but since the morning she had avoided instinctively meeting them again.

Mr. Aleyne's voice was suddenly heard, haranguing audibly above the rest. He, Captain Lethbridge, Lady Alice, and Helen

were sitting together in a group. Lord Harvard was being supplied with tea by Lady Marian, and talking *sotto voce* to Edith.

Mr. Aleyné had become sufficiently at home now to uplift his voice on his favourite topic. He pined to be again the manager and despotic power of an amateur theatrical company, and he thought, “Here was a party eminently calculated to do him credit, and here was the moment to introduce his plan.”

“That archway would be perfect, Hamilton,” he was saying. “Only got to throw a curtain across it. This for the green-room, dressing-rooms, there on each side. It could not be better!”

“I knew you would be up to that business!” exclaimed Godfrey, laughing. “I told them before you came. Well, I’m agreeable. Why not get up something for the tenth? We have three days to think about it, and Bussy would do ‘the Infant Prodigy’ in costume; wouldn’t you, Buss?”

“I do not know what you mean, Goffy,”

said Bussy solemnly. She and Augusta had come down to make their usual afternoon appearance at tea.

"Oh, if we are going to ridicule the thing,"—began Aleyne in an aggrieved tone.

"My dear fellow!" cried Godfrey, "nothing further from my mind. Ridicule! Good heavens! Mother, do you hear—may we turn the big drawing-room into a shrine of Thespia for the tenth? We can clear it all away, can't we, Aleyne, if we want to worship Terpsichore afterwards?"

"Oh, cleared away in five minutes!" exclaimed Aleyne in a voice of assurance.

"Leave it all to me, and the thing will be done and swept away again while the ladies are changing their dresses."

"Capital!" cried Goff. "We can act before supper, and dance a bit afterwards. We shall have a day of it, for the feed comes off at six. How do you like the idea, Nell?" he called to his elder sister.

"I think it would be charming. Alice, do *you* like the sort of thing?"

"Delightful!" said Lady Alice, "and

I know Mr. Aleyne's powers, for I saw the tableaux at Lady Fairland's last season, and you arranged everything there; did you not?"

Mr. Aleyne lit up with enthusiasm.

"Of course I did!" he exclaimed. "Were you there? Was it not exquisite?"

"Etcetera—etcetera!" exclaimed Goff, in an aside to Trixie. "Now he is off! We will give him a run of ten minutes, and then we must pull him up again. Meanwhile you and I can talk of something else. Will you have some more tea? No. Well, when all this row about the acting is over, will you come into the garden with me, and get some flowers to wear at dinner? All right; mind, you have promised. Now, Aleyne, you pull up! Is Buss to do the Infant Prodigy, or is she not? In other words, what are we to act? Is it to be comedy, or tragedy, or melodramatic, or—what do you call it?"

"Oh, that requires serious consideration," said Mr. Aleyne. "Let me see——"

"Let it be something more dignified for

the young ladies than mere comedy," put in Lady Marian.

"Oh, let it be tragedy at once. Nell, you shall be Lady Macbeth, and I shall be Duncan, and you shall kill me, and Lethbridge shall be the Ghost. Will that do, Aleyné?"

"Nonsense!" said Mr. Aleyné gravely. "Listen to me. It is my opinion, that with so little time before us for rehearsal, we had better not attempt language at all, tragic or comic. Let us have tableaux—they are for the most part purely artistic, and I could easily put two or three of the best of those from Lady Fairland's on the scene again with such materials as we have here."

"What would you do with us?" cried Godfrey.

"Well," continued Aleyné, looking round with a critical expression, "Lady Alice Seton would make a beautiful Abbess. Miss Hamilton, you would be a perfect 'Lady Jane Grey.' Lethbridge, you would do for a Knight of Gwynne, and"—his eyes wandered to the pair in the corner, and he

paused over them with the eye of a connoisseur—"Miss O'Neil——"

"Oh, do not count me!" cried Trixie. "I never acted in my life. I am sure I could not do it."

"Oh, you must!" came in expostulation from every side.

"This is not acting, you know," said Mr. Aleyne. "I will pose you, and you will only have to stand still. Egmont—or Leicester," he continued reflectively, as he regarded Godfrey and her. "I will think it over to-night, and have the grouping written out for you by the morning. We shall have time for several rehearsals before the tenth. Next Friday, is it not?—and this is Tuesday. Capital!"

"Aleyne is in his element, at all events," said Godfrey, as they all rose, and the dressing-gong sounded through the hall. "Oh, hang it! what a nuisance, it is too late to go to the garden. I'll run down and fetch you some flowers, Miss O'Neil, and I shall keep your promise until to-morrow evening."

"I did not give you any promise!" she called after him, but he was gone.

* * * * *

When Trixie sat alone in her bedroom that night she felt in her little self that "life had begun" — that indeed a new life had been suddenly given to her, and was thrilling and vibrating through every vein — a life of mystic, beautiful confusion, that made her giddy and delirious, as if she were walking in a dream. She sat alone on the rug before her fire, gazing into the burning coal, and tried to think about it.

Three days ago her life, and all its inner visions, had been made up of a round of home routine — of Aunt Helen and her daily rules; of the boys, with all the work and difficulties connected with them; of Margie, and of the simple duties and childish pleasures of Sea Grange.

And now all that seemed suddenly of the past, and real life, present life — ah, more than that — all future life was enveloped in a delicious halo, a confusion of bright glances and of eager words.

She seemed to see nothing as she looked into the firelight but blue eyes, whose gaze bewildered her ; she seemed to feel nothing but a sense of strange, exquisite existence, poured suddenly into her being.

Every one seemed so kind to her, too ; everything was so pleasant, so novel, so exciting. She was unconscious of Lady Marian's manœuvres, and took her bland smiles in good faith. So everybody seemed to her delightful, and life was all suddenly electrified with a mystic and bewildering charm.

She felt half afraid of her intense enjoyment. She seemed scarcely herself, and when she realised that it was "little Trixie O'Neil" in the midst of all this gaiety and excitement, she felt a shiver of loneliness creep over her for an instant, and she was half afraid.

Then she remembered how *he* had said to her, that—"she must never be afraid in his house," and she thought how impossible it would be to feel fear really when he was near her,—how delicious it would be to

go through inconceivable dangers with just him to protect her. How strong he was, and how tender, and how kind.

Only, she wished Aunt Helen were here in the midst of it with her ; and she thought how delightful it would be to sit in the Sea Grange garden at Margie's feet some day and describe it all, and how it would please Margie to hear how nice Jim's friend had been to her.

Perhaps it was *all* for Jim's sake !

CHAPTER VI.

THE WHITE ROSE.

NEXT day they were very busy over the tableaux. There was a long morning of consultation, and nobody went out fishing. They had their parts allotted to each, and in the evening they were to rehearse together.

There was much talk, much laughter, and much trial of Mr. Aleyne's professional patience, and some rebellion too, for no one seemed much inclined to do what they were told. He was a skilful general, however, and got his forces into order in time.

All kinds of things were wanted for the costumes, and Mr. Aleyne announced it would be necessary for him to make a journey into Edinburgh. So in the after-

noon Lady Marian suggested, that she should take him and two others of the party on a shopping expedition in her carriage.

The two elder gentlemen proposed driving together, with Godfrey's chestnuts, over a distant part of the estate. Goff said his energies were equal to nothing beyond Bussy's society on the lawn.

Mr. Aleyne and Lady Cairne accompanied Lady Marian; and the others, stimulated by Mr. Eldon of St. Ives (who arrived, to Lady Marian's horror, just as the carriage drove from the door), made up a croquet-match, in which Godfrey stoutly refused to join.

"Do not play either," he urged Trixie; "give up your place to Edith. Harvard is getting spooney about her, and I will relate our diplomacy to the lady mother when she comes back, and get an order of merit for us both. Come and talk instead to Buss and me."

Trixie found herself obeying him, and they sat together under the trees, watched the croquet, and teased Buss, and chattered

and laughed with very happiness all the long May afternoon.

"There are the tea-things walking into the drawing-room, and no one come back from Edinburgh yet," said Godfrey at length, as about five o'clock the air became chilly and the shadows began to fall.

"And that croquet is not half over," he continued. "I believe Harvard is still at the second hoop, and Eldon is struggling at that stick. Well done, Nell! that was a good stroke! How people can be so foolish," he went on, turning round on his elbow and looking up into Trixie's face, "as to do *anything* when doing *nothing* is so much more agreeable to do!"

"I think you are dreadfully lazy," said Trixie.

"Do you? Do you think I have no energies at all? Can do nothing with my animal faculties but stretch them on the grass? Oh! you ask Miss O'Neil, Buss, how high she thinks you and I can jump."

"*I* cannot jump at all," said Bussy in solemn protest, "but *you* can."

"You don't look much like it now," said Trixie.

"Do I not? Would you like to see?" He was on his feet in an instant.

There was a five-bar rail at the foot of the terrace where they were sitting, that separated the garden from the park. He had cleared it in a moment, before she could answer, and was back again with dancing eyes at her side.

"If you really look upon me as being lazy, Miss O'Neil, I think I must, as they say, 'show you a few.' I was not the champion athlete of my day at Eton to be looked down upon by a young lady now," laughed Godfrey, "was I, Buss?"

"I know you are strong," said Trixie, smiling up at him, "but that does not prevent the fact that you may be lazy as well."

"Which means you stick to your opinion. Well, I must win my way out of it; I dare-say it is deserved. Buss, there is Miss Kerr gesticulating to you with violence from the school-room. It is your tea-time; de-

part, and be a good child, for, I warn you, I am not in a mood to 'beg pardon' for any one. Miss O'Neil has insulted me," he added, as the child ran away, "and I am aggrieved."

"I did not mean to offend you, Captain Hamilton,—” she began.

"Will you come to the garden with me?" he said, interrupting her suddenly. "You said last night you would."

"I never said so," persisted Trixie; "you took my silence for consent. But if you like I will go."

"All right," he answered, "come along; they have not nearly finished their croquet, and there is not a prospect of tea."

They walked away across the lawn together, and disappeared among the clustering shrubs.

"I do not like you to have a bad opinion of me, Miss O'Neil. I hope you do not really think me an indolent fellow. You know I have tremendous energies when I like to use them."

"I dare say you have, Captain Hamilton."

"Indeed I have. I do not know any man that can sit a longer day in the saddle than I can, or do a stiffer day on the moor, and I could run a quarter further and lift a heavier weight than any man of my year, when I left Eton. I must go through a course of performances for you, I think."

Trixie looked up at him admiringly. She had full faith in his herculean powers. "Strong as a lion, gentle as a lamb," he seemed to her, and yet even she saw instinctively the weakness somewhere; she could not express it, but she felt it. There was such a wealth of latent force, unused—apparently useless. Indolent, insouciant, strong, and careless of his strength he seemed.

"I think you are stronger than any one I know," she said, "when you like to be; but I suppose you seem lazy because you do not care to seem anything else."

"Don't care enough—that is about it, I fancy," said Godfrey. "I wonder what one does care for in this world, in a general way," he added suddenly, looking round upon her as he spoke.

"I suppose it is something one likes very much, as a motive, that does make the will strong," continued Trixie.

"Yes. And you think my will out of balance with my physical powers, do you? Well, I hate being bothered, and often give in to some people just for a quiet life; but I generally flatter myself that I get my own way too when I want it."

"I dare say you take it, when you care enough," replied Trixie, laughing.

"Yes, when I do want a thing, I like to have it quickly, at once," exclaimed Goff impulsively; "and when I do put forth my energies, I think I can make most people's will give in to mine. Yes, I can make people do what I like generally, when I care about it. I like trying sometimes. Do you think I could bend your will?" he said, looking away from her, and laughing a little shyly.

Trixie's heart beat very quickly; something thrilled her in his tone.

"Could I?" he asked excitedly, turning upon her in the path. She looked up at him.

"I hope not," she almost whispered. "I hope not, unless it were right for me to bend my will to yours."

He laughed a little recklessly.

"But do you not think I might bring you round to my views, perhaps, of right and wrong? I daresay they are very different from yours."

"I do not think there can be a difference, really," she said.

He turned from her, her clear, bright eyes seemed to abash him; she looked so fair and childlike as she stood before him, so radiant too, as if no shadow had ever crossed her life, no evil thought poisoned one drop in the crystal current of her soul. He turned from her with an impatient sigh, and then he stooped, and half mechanically, half unconsciously, he plucked a snow-white rose that trailed over the pathway at their feet, and held it out to her.

She took it in silence.

"Will that do for you to wear this evening?" he said suddenly, as if to change forcibly the stream of their ideas.

"Thank you; it is lovely. It will do very well for my hair. How perfect it is!" she continued, turning along the pathway towards the house again; "look, each tiny leaf is like a beautiful transparent shell."

Godfrey turned round on the pathway before her; again he stopped her, and held out his hand.

"Give it to me," he said. Trixie looked up at him surprised.

"What! my rose? You have given it to *me*."

"Yes, but give it back to me," he continued, in a vehement tone.

"Why?" she asked.

"Because I ask you for it. Give it to me."

Trixie laughed merrily. "Oh, you are trying your power of persistency, are you? Because you order me, not ask me, you mean. Well, the object is not worth a contest, but you tempt one to say—*no*."

Her eyes flashed for a moment, and she smiled, with a shade of defiance, into his face.

Godfrey's cheek crimsoned, a quick light shot from his eyes, and he bit his lip hard as he looked down on her, as if crushing back a flood of overwhelming impulse.

She met his gaze boldly for a moment, and then her eyes fell below the weight and power of his.

"I think I could *make* you," he whispered.

Trixie looked away from him, and laughed again, with a strong effort to recover her self-control.

"I think you had better let me pass, Captain Hamilton," she said. "You are making a great deal of fuss about a little thing; it is not worth a quarrel. I give in."

She held up the flower to him, and turned aside.

A gleam of triumph shot for an instant over his face—she had given him her snow-white rose.

He thrust it into his button-hole as he walked after her down the pathway.†

The game of croquet was over, and they all turned again into the tea-room. There

was laughing and fun, and much discussion on Aleyne's purchases, and in the evening the first rehearsal came on.

There was no more time for *tête-à-têtes*, Mr. Aleyne kept them all till a late hour at their work.

The white rose had dropped from Godfrey's button-hole as he dressed for dinner, and he laid it aside, meaning to put it in water presently, and let it live its short, beautiful day. But he forgot it then, and at bedtime, and when he rose next morning, it met his eye, quite withered away.

He caught it up eagerly, and smiled over the incident it recalled.

"It is too late," he thought, "to save its life now. What a darling *she* is, to be sure!" and he laughed to himself, tossed the rose on one side, and soon his servant swept it away.

CHAPTER VII.

EGMONT.

THE great day came at length. The day when the young laird of the Craig was to meet his tenantry for the first time since his majority, and entertain them at his own house. It was to be a golden day for the whole family.

Old Miss Kerr resigned her authority without reserve, at an early hour, and released Buss and Gussy to run wild over the gardens for the whole day. And from the earliest break of the morning they might be seen, pursuing Goff over the park, and along the avenue, while he superintended the erection of tents and flag-staffs, floral arches, and every possible insignia of enjoyment.

The Craig presented a gay and pretty

picture of summer merriment that day—the school-children came and were feasted, and the women and the poorer tenantry were entertained in the tents.

The rehearsals went on again, late in the afternoon, and then, as the gentlemen were all to dine at six o'clock with the farmers, the ladies assembled for a high tea in Godfrey's gun-room, the only apartment in the house not dedicated to the expected guests. It was a very merry repast, for the gentlemen came and waited on them, and Trixie thought it much pleasanter than a stiff dinner. Godfrey made her his charge, brought her every conceivable kind of food, and then came and sat on a low seat at the corner of her chair, and talked to her, under cover of the mingling voices.

"This is my especial den, Miss O'Neil. I hope you like it."

She glanced up round the panelled walls, hung with rifles and fishing-rods, and numerous trophies of his sports.

"I think it is very cosy," she answered.

"There is my first brush over that pic-

ture up there. I won it with Lord Queensferry's hounds, just below this place, six years ago. I was only a youngster then. And that's my poor father's gun, and there's his sword, there, just over the mantel-piece. And that is a picture of Bussy and Guss riding the old pony 'Shepherd' in their paniers, when they were only two years old."

"All kinds of treasures," said Trixie.

"Yes; I've lots more of the same kind of thing too up in the smoking-room. I can show you them any day you like."

Trixie smiled a little sadly at him.

"This is our last day," she answered.

"Your last day? No! You are not going to-morrow?"

"Yes, we are. Why, we have been here five whole days, Captain Hamilton."

"That's nothing! Oh, you must not go. I shall speak to my mother, and to Colonel O'Neil. I shall certainly not let you go. I won't hear of it."

Trixie laughed a little, she was thinking of the episode of the white rose.

"I am afraid your will is not omnipotent after all," she answered. "You will find the upsetting of that arrangement beyond even your powers."

"You allow me a little bit of power, then, do you?" he exclaimed, looking eagerly at her, "notwithstanding your calling me lazy, in that insulting sort of way."

"I think you cannot help having power, Captain Hamilton," she answered, "because——"

"Because why?" he persisted.

"Because power is in you, although you do not often take the trouble to use it."

"I do sometimes, though, do I not?" he replied, laughing.

"Yes, when something suddenly comes, now and then, stronger than your indolence, and makes you, in spite of yourself——"

"Impulse, eh?" he continued. It was pleasant to him to lead her on into this analysis of his character, to feel her resting on the key-notes of his being with a soft, vibrating touch, as he fixed his eyes upon her, and drew out her very life towards his.

"Do you think we shall get through our parts well together?" he said presently.

"Oh, I hope so," exclaimed Trixie. "I am so much afraid of going wrong. I was so stupid about it, too, all yesterday evening."

"You were capital, however, to-day."

"Yes, I think so. I could not stand or look as Mr. Aleyne wished me at first; but I took away the book to my room last night, and read his interlined translation, and then I caught the spirit of the part. How beautiful it is!"

"Oh, you mean 'Egmont,' the German thing. It is a bore it isn't in English; I did not take in much about it, except that I am to stand and look at you as if I rather liked you. I am afraid I shall find that difficult," he added.

"It is such a pretty story. You know Clärchen is a poor bourgeoisie girl, and you are the Count of the Netherlands; and you are so brave, and so good, and so great," she went on, turning upon him, her eyes sparkling with enthusiasm.

"I wish I were," replied Godfrey drily.

"And I," continued Trixie, "I love—I mean Clärchen, you know. She is so afraid you will never come back, and are going to be killed."

"I think that picture of the Huguenots, Millais' thing, would have made a capital model for the tableau; it would have saved Aleyne a deal of trouble if he had just copied it."

"Ah! but you know the costumes would not have been right."

"Neither they would. Halloo! there goes half-past five. I must be off to dress. Uncle, Aleyne, Colonel, we shall have the fellows down upon us before we can look about us. I am going into the conservatory for some flowers," he said, turning for a last word with Trixie, "will you come to the drawing-room window in twenty minutes, and I will bring some for you too?"

As usual she obeyed him, and she was waiting there when he came from the greenhouse. Trixie thought he looked handsome and noble as any Egmont, as he approached

her, swinging carelessly along, fresh and trim in his evening attire. He carried his cap in his hand, his hair was brushed back from his forehead, and his light curls blowing about in the evening air.

The rich amber rays of the sunset fell over the garden, across the green slopes, and on the flowers, and he came to her through them with the sunlight dancing in golden shadow upon his hair, in ruddy light on his face, and reflected back in his eyes.

"Here are your flowers," he said, coming close to the window, and standing looking up into her face from outside. He handed in to her a beautiful bouquet of choice exotics he had gathered with much care. "And here is a small decoration I have provided for myself. Will you give me something to fasten it in?"

Trixie turned to a little table, where her work-basket stood. She felt nervous as she had stood waiting for him there, and tremulous; a sad feeling had oppressed her that all this would soon be over. A foreboding sense of a future, of a time coming

of faded brightness, of sunshine gone. The "last-evening" feeling had crept over her, and she could not control her sadness. She could scarcely meet his eyes, and her voice faltered as she tried to answer him.

He bent in at the window. "There, one of those," he said, pointing to her pin-cushion in the work-basket.

"Stay, I will give you one," she replied.

His shoulder almost touched hers as he stretched his arm in. Suddenly he drew back, and looked at her.

"Why do you tremble?" he said.

Her hand lay upon the basket, his rested very near it. He looked full into her eyes, in silence for one moment, and then he closed the little hand that lay so near his, suddenly and tightly for an instant, in his strong clasp.

"Poor little thing," he exclaimed, "it is fluttering like a little frightened bird!" And then he let her go again, and stood straight upright, and fastened the flower in his coat.

"We meet in the gun-room at night, do we not?" he said suddenly in an altered tone, for he had seen, though she had not

heard it, that the door in the further drawing-room was opening, and that some of them were coming in, Lady Cairne, Lethbridge, and Aleyne, the first symptoms of the party assembling in the large hall.

"I believe so," said Trixie.

"And you are all coming to hear the speechifying after the dinner, are you not?"

"Yes."

"Ah, that is capital. Au revoir, then. I must receive the honourable gentlemen at the other side."

She turned from the window, and, without entering the large hall, she left the room.

Godfrey watched till the door closed upon her, and then he walked slowly a few paces away. A curious light was kindling over his face, and suddenly he threw up his cap into the air, with the gaiety of a triumphant school-boy who had won the game he played.

"Veni, vidi, vici!" he exclaimed to himself, and then he ran quickly round to the entrance hall.

CHAPTER VIII.

“AUGENBLICKE.”

AN hour later, Trixie, feeling eagerly excited, took her place with the other ladies of the party, besides Miss Kerr and the little girls, on a raised platform at the end of the long dining-room, to see the close of the great dinner, and to hear the gentlemen speak.

The dining-room was brilliantly lit up, the table covered with beautiful old plate, with sparkling glass, and pyramids of flowers.

The tenant farmers filled the places on each side, Godfrey sat at one end of the table, supported by Lord Clarenleigh and the old clergyman; and the other gentlemen were grouped towards the lower end.

The banquet was over, and after the ladies arrived came first the royal honours of the Queen, and then the oldest tenant on the property rose to propose the toast of the evening, "The health of the young laird."

Godfrey sat with a flushed cheek, while the old man solemnly enumerated the honours and responsibilities of his position, the great antiquity and virtues of his predecessors, and the hopes, the affection, and the confidence with which they regarded him; and Trixie felt how true it all was, and how worthy was her hero of such honour and praise. Her heart seemed swelling with enthusiasm and sympathy; she felt so pleased for him, so proud of him; and when at length, amid cheers of greeting, Godfrey rose to his feet, Trixie felt the hot tears starting to her eyes and forcing their way down her cheeks.

He looked so bright and handsome. He spoke a few words, without any eloquence, but frank and hearty, and straight to the point.

The people were delighted with him, and he sat down amid rounds of applause.

Then some one else got up and spoke, then another and another, and another, until due honours had been paid to Lady Marian, to every member of her family, and to every magnate of the neighbourhood; and all this time, from her place on the raised platform, Trixie was watching Goff.

He leant back in his chair, and, as she watched him, she saw a curious change come over his countenance from the moment when he sat down, and the strain of the excitement of his own part in the proceedings had passed away. An expression of weariness and dissatisfaction had come into his face. The words of some of the speakers seemed almost to pain him, as they spoke again and again of their expectations from *him*, and, as one after another began in the same strain, he often looked restlessly round as if impatient for the ceremony to be at an end.

At length it was over. They broke up, the ladies passed into one of the smaller drawing-rooms, and the gentlemen joined them there.

Godfrey came straight to Trixie. She looked up at him, with irrepressible pride and admiration.

"Well?" he said.

"I think you did capitally!" she exclaimed.

"What a bore it was!" he continued.

"What a lot of rubbish they did talk!"

"I am sure they did not; it all seemed quite true and real to me," she answered.

The look of pain came into his face again.

"True!" he exclaimed. "It sounded false and hollow and absurd, in my ears. Good Heavens, if they only knew, how *far* from true it is!"

"How do you mean?" she asked.

"I do not know why I tell you what I feel," he answered quickly. "But you are the only one here I could tell it to, and—*it* is so horribly true. A fit of moralising came upon me, while the old chaps were holding forth, a kind of hideous contrast came dancing up before my eyes, of what *I am*, and of what *they* made me out to be.

If they only knew," he went on bitterly, "what a humbug the whole thing is!"

"I do not understand you," said Trixie, looking wonderingly into his changing face.

"No, of course you do not; how should you? It is only when they talk away about the old property, and all that kind of stuff, and when I think of myself, poor beggar that I am, if they only knew, they would hate me."

"Hate you?"

"Do you think *you* could ever hate me?" he said, turning his eyes quickly on her face.

"I? Captain Hamilton, what can you mean? How strangely you talk to-night!"

"Because I have a sort of feeling to-night," he went on, in an excited tone, "as if I were an idiot, and a fool, in every kind of way, and as if I were playing a false game with my life, and—I feel as if I did not care what anybody thought of me, so long as *you*——"

He stopped. Mr. Aleyne came up to

them, eager that they should all go to dress. The party for the evening was assembling, and the tableaux would immediately begin.

Trixie's parts in them were not to come for some time. Godfrey appeared first, in several scenes with the others : with Lady Alice, as "Lancelot and Guinevere ;" with Helen, in "Lady Jane Grey ;" as the Knight of Gwynne, as the Lord of Burleigh ; and Captain Lethbridge, Lord Harvard, and all of them, had their parts to play.

At last Trixie was summoned from Helen's dressing-room, where she had been undergoing a metamorphosis, under Mr. Aleyne's direction, at the hands of Miss Kerr and Lady Marian's German maid.

And she came down among them, into the impromptu green-room, in her simple picturesque dress, a little bourgeoisie of the Netherlands, as dainty and beautiful a Clärchen as Goethe could have wished to see. The primitive cap framing her face, her little hands folded over her apron, a

bright coloured petticoat and boddice, a flower nestling in the folds over her breast.

Just at the door Godfrey met her.

He looked his character well too, his tall stalwart figure, and fair countenance, set off by his soldier's dress.

"By Jove!" he said, "how jolly you look!"

Trixie's eyes returned the compliment as she glanced up at him.

"Are we to go on at once?" asked Godfrey.

"Yes," whispered Aleyne, "come in here."

They passed on to the stage; Aleyne had dexterously arranged it: there was a regular *mécanique* drop-screen worked from behind; a curtain closed in the space for the figures on every side, for the audience crowded so closely, that Aleyne had all the background veiled away, and would allow the tableaux only to be visible from the front.

"Otherwise," he had explained to them,

when the actors had remonstrated, pleading that they might be permitted to witness their friends' performance from the sides, "while you are looking at them, lots of people will see you, and it will spoil the whole effect. No, no; the stage is much too narrow for that, it must be curtained in."

"So you two just stand here," he whispered hurriedly, "till the drop-screen be quite fallen, and I give the signal that you may move. Do not be nervous, I will not let any one look on from behind at you, I know it always puts one out."

And then he left them.

It was the pretty scene, in Goethe's exquisite play, where Egmont visits Clärchen in her simple bourgeois home, and they stand saying farewell together, in a silent intensity of anguish and of love.

They stand, a wondrous contrast. He, all strength, eagerness, and excitement; she, all tenderness and simplicity, childish confidence and patient content.

She looks up at him; her hands, clasped together, are raised, and held captive in

his. His face is bent over her, full of eager tenderness and stern grief.

They stood in the full heat and glare of the strong light thrown upon them. Trixie felt every nerve quiver and vibrate as the curtain rose slowly, and she was conscious of a hundred eyes centred with electric influence upon Godfrey and herself.

It seemed long that she stood there motionless, almost breathless,—such a long time.

Slowly at length the curtain began to fall, very slowly, till it had hidden them from view. They still stood immovable, Aleyne's signal had not yet come. Trixie seemed to grow giddy with the intensity of her effort; she seemed lost in the sweetness of that loving, lingering gaze,—surely so very real,—that met her wistful eyes as she looked up into his face.

The curtain had fallen, but they stood there one little moment, sweet but swiftly passing, while, in the silent language of Clärchen and Egmont, each told to each their hearts' real tale.

One moment,—then the signal bell tingled, and Aleyne's voice was heard. He threw back the inner curtains upon them, and came forward to change rapidly the settings of the scene. *If* anything met his eyes, or struck him, in the aspect of the two faces he encountered, he never revealed what discovery he may have made.

Trixie broke away from both of them, and ran from the green-room. She felt intoxicated with excitement; the love in her Egmont's eyes seemed to burn into her brain with an intensity of feeling, half pleasure, half pain. She felt a longing to hide herself, to rush away from all those spectators, from every one.

She would have thrown herself on her knees by her bedside, and covered her head, and lost herself in the memory of his gaze, as he bent over her, and in the delicious consciousness of the love uncontrollable it had expressed.

But they would not leave her. Miss Kerr was there, and Aleyne waiting out-

side, impatient to give his verdict on her Kenilworth costume, and immediately she must come forward again.

"Perfect!" he exclaimed. "Yes, I am glad we departed from the literal so far. The sea-green suits you wonderfully. Properly speaking, it should not be worn until the scene with Elizabeth in the harbour. But I am glad I did it, you could not be better. Go in there, please—Hamilton will be down directly, and I will call you on."

She went into the little waiting-room. It was empty; all the minor satellites had rushed round to the entrance of the saloon to witness from the back seats Lady Alice and Lethbridge in a scene from Henry VIII. The waiting-room was deserted, and Trixie sat down and clasped her hands together, and tried to recover her self-possession in this moment of calm.

Aunt Helen, Margie!—the names came rising to her lips as she tried to clear away from her eyes the confusion of new feelings, and new thoughts, that crowded upon

her, and she passed her hand over her forehead in the effort to brush away the bright vision of an indefinable joy that seemed at once to delight and to intoxicate her.

She had little time, for the door was thrown open, and there he was, Leicester, dazzling and magnificent in his Court costume.

"Well, Amy!" he said. He came close up to her, and then stepped back, surprised into an admiring exclamation.

The soft, glistening sea-green robe of Amy Robsart became her wonderfully, and she looked lovely indeed, as she sat before him with her hands folded and her eyes half afraid to raise themselves again to his.

"Trixie!" he exclaimed, suddenly coming close to her, and throwing himself down by her side; she turned away from him, but his arm was round her before she could escape.

"Do not turn from me," he continued. "Trixie, Trixie, I love you!—you know I love you, my darling, and,—you love me!

Trixie, tell me, say it to me—you love me?"

His voice had sunk into a murmur, and the fair face was drawn closer to him, and raised to his; he bent over it, and before she could answer him he had pressed his lips to hers.

"You love me, Trixie?"—no more.

"Confound it!" he had scarcely time to exclaim, "here are these horrid people again." And he drew his arm away from her and sprang to his feet.

She turned upon them all, as they came in, a face at once radiant with tender joy and crimson with confusion.

"Come on!" It was Aleyne's voice, imperious and irresistible again. "Leicester! Amy Robsart! the scene is ready, come on!"

And once more they were posed together. This tableau was to be the last. It was vociferously applauded, and repeatedly encored. The flush on Amy Robsart's cheek and the love in her eyes, half-abashed, half-afraid, but all joyous and uncontrollable, were perfect; and Leicester's smile had

gained, since he had appeared as Egmont; a gleam of bright, self-complacent triumph, that well became the part.

"Come down quickly," he whispered to her as they parted at the green-room door. "They will begin dancing immediately, and mind you are engaged for the first to me."

Trixie had not even now a moment to herself. The girls crowded round her in her room as she changed her dress, with a buzz of congratulation. Her beauty, the youthful grace of her attitudes, the deep reality in her expressions, had pleased the most critical spectator. She was the little heroine of the hour.

"Come down!" they all called to her in a ferment of haste and excitement, and down she had to go again.

Godfrey stood close by the door as she entered. The music was just beginning.

"Our dance," he said, approaching her at once, and drawing her hand within his arm.

Captain Lethbridge, Mr. Aleyne, Lord Harvard, all were crowding round her, and eager to write their names upon her card.

But Godfrey pushed through them impatiently.

"Come along," he said, "do not let us waste time. They will not begin till we do. It is a shame to lose a bar of that Strauss;" and his arm had encircled her, and he had carried her round the room before she had time to make further engagements. He had opened the ball, and in five seconds the floor was crowded with pirouetting couples.

"There they go!" muttered Godfrey above Trixie's head; "they are in full swing now," and then he stopped suddenly. "Are you tired?" he asked, looking down upon her. "You are. Come along; we've done our part of the duty; they will not miss us now for a little while. Come in here with me and rest."

He turned quickly away from the dancers and drew her after him through the crowd, out of the large saloon, across the hall, into Helen's little morning room.

"Sit down," he exclaimed, and he threw himself by her side. "Trixie!" he turned his gaze full upon her face, his eyes sparkling

and excitable, his cheek crimson as her own with the strength of his impulse.

"Trixie!" He moved as if he would have taken her into his arms again, but she drew back from him, and put her hand on his.

He glanced round, people were passing to and fro across the doorway, and might at any instant turn in.

"Nuisance!" muttered Godfrey. "I suppose a fellow mustn't make a fool of himself."

He caught the little hand that had touched his in a tight grasp. "Trixie, look at me," he continued, "listen to me, answer me. You shall not dance with any one else but me to-night."

She looked up at him amused. "Why not?" she asked.

"Because I love you," he continued hotly. "I love you, and I want you every moment for myself, and I could kill any other fellow that comes near you. Trixie, Trixie, tell me that you love me."

She turned her eyes on him again, she

left her hand in the tight grasp of his. Love him! She felt she had ceased to be anything but love for him; she had lost all consciousness of self, all consciousness of being, save in this new mystic glory that enveloped her from the light of those eyes.

"You love me, Trixie?"

She shook her head at him, and her lips parted in a trembling smile, but she could not speak; her eyes were blinded, brimful of tears.

"You darling!" he went on, "and you will promise me that never, never, never, you will love any one, or marry any one but me?"

The tears came flowing over, but she could still only shake her head at him and turn away, and answer by the pressure of her fingers as he continued hurriedly—

"Do not turn from me, Trixie, look at me again. (Confound all these people!) Look at me, Trixie; tell me with your own lips, darling; I want to hear it—tell it me—say you love me—say it," he continued

impetuously, bending forward to look into her face. "Say, 'I love you, Godfrey.'"

She looked up at him, smiling through her tears.

"You know," she said very softly.

"What?" he exclaimed again. "Say it, dearest, say you love me, you will be my own little darling wife, will you?"

"Yes, Godfrey," whispered Trixie, very low and very grave indeed. "You know," she added, "you know I will."

He bent over her again, and poured torrents of love-words into her ear; called her every soft and tender name that his fervent fancy suggested to him; filled her with thrills of happiness, exquisite and bewildering, and was intensely happy himself as he caught her whispered answers and drank in the wealth of love that shone on him from her tearful eyes.

But the music had stopped and began again several times, and inquiries were being made right and left for Godfrey, and Lady Marian became aware that he was missing, and some one else besides.

She sent emissaries in search, and presently Bussy, who had not been sent to bed yet, burst in upon them, in Helen's morning room.

"Goff! Goff!" she stopped short, and became aware suddenly that "something had occurred."

Trixie held up her head, brushed away her tears, and strove to look unconscious. Godfrey released her hand, sprang to his feet, and came towards Bussy, with a look, for an instant, as if he could have annihilated her; and poor Buss became very red all over, and looked extremely penitent.

"Goffy, please, I beg your pardon."

"Well?" exclaimed Goff, in a voice of thunder.

"Please, mamma wants you, Goffy."

Godfrey growled. "Well," he continued impatiently, "what does she want?"

"Oh," stammered Buss, "I can't tell, you know, because——" she glanced furtively towards Trixie.

"Go back to your mamma instantly," said Godfrey; "tell her you have delivered

your message. And you be very careful how you bring messages of any kind to me again, Bussy. I do not approve of them."

Buss departed much crest-fallen, and Godfrey turned to Trixie again.

"I suppose we must go back," he said, "and dance with those people. But, Trixie," he continued, as she rose to take his arm, "look at me again, darling; remember it is settled then between us, between you and me. You will love me always, for ever and ever. You are mine, my very very own, as long as we both do live. Say it, say 'my love' to me, Trixie."

She looked up very solemnly at him, and clasped her hands together round his arm, and her eyes melted again, her lips moved. "My love!" she said in obedience, so softly, but so earnestly and truly, that the two little words sank down, down into his heart, and stayed there; and amid much chance and change, they were never swept away.

He trembled with the strength of his impetuous impulse, and he felt, that if he stood there and looked at her, he would be

unable to control his longing to gather her to his heart. So he turned away, and would have led her back into the ball-room, but she stopped him an instant.

"Godfrey," she said, her voice shaking as she spoke, "what will Lady Marian say?"

A cloud fell over Godfrey's face. He did not answer.

"Will she have me?" continued Trixie simply. "Do you know, I do not think she likes me much, Godfrey; and it would be dreadful for her to have a girl she could not love, for her son's——." She stopped at the word.

"Rubbish!" exclaimed Godfrey. Then he turned to her again, and hurried on, "We must go back now, Trixie, darling; but we must have time to talk to each other, and to say many things before any one else need be told. Do not let us say anything about it to-night. Shall we, dear?"

She shook her head. "I'll say nothing. I could not, Godfrey."

"Come along then," he said; and in a moment they were back in the crowd again.

"I suppose I must let you dance with these other fellows, after all. . . There is Lethbridge waiting for you, and——Lady Alice, this is our dance; may I have the honour?"

And then Trixie was swept away from him, and for the next twenty minutes he was whirling Lady Alice vigorously round the room.

His mother kept her eye upon him after this, and he was allowed to escape no more duties.

One dance followed another, and Trixie was appropriated by every variety of partner. Godfrey seemed to have taken a new line of action, for he came near her no more. He seemed in high spirits, dancing vehemently with all the young ladies of the county, and looking so unconscious of Trixie, turning his gaze so seldom in her direction, that before the end of the evening she had begun almost to wonder, and to ache for the glance of his eyes to turn towards hers once more.

The last dance was over. She was stand-

ing by the doorway of the saloon, watching the departures, alone for the moment, for her partner had seen some lady acquaintance issuing forth unconductured to her carriage, and had rushed forward, with Trixie's permission, to offer his arm.

Trixie stood waiting his return. Suddenly she became conscious that Godfrey was by her side. His voice addressed her, but in a curious, unconcerned tone. They were closely surrounded ; she glanced at him, and saw that he was not bending over her, but standing straight upright, and looking away from her, across towards the other end of the room, apparently to observers quite unconscious of her vicinity, but she knew he was speaking to her now.

"Will you come," he was saying, in a tone very low but distinct, "to-morrow morning to the lake side? You know where I mean—just below the garden, under the chestnut-trees. Do not look at me, my mother's eyes are fixed on me like a—well, a nuisance. You are always up early, come at eight. Yes! All right!"

And he moved away, strolling carelessly through the crowd, towards his mother, having left Trixie apparently unnoticed and alone.

Her partner returned immediately, with many apologies to her side.

CHAPTER IX.

“DON’T TELL.”

GODFREY HAMILTON sat in his peculiar den. It was long past midnight; the ball was over, every guest had departed, and his own friends, “the fellows,” as he called them, had finished their nocturnal cigars, and had left him to meditations and slumbers.

For the latter, Godfrey did not seem ready just yet. He sat in his huge luxurious arm-chair, drawn close up by the fire; the lamp burnt bright and cheerily by his side. He was encased in a long smoking-coat, his heels rested on the fender, his head was thrown back, and volumes of smoke curled from his lips as he puffed on steadily at his meerschaum, and gazed fixedly into the fire. He looked happy at first; a bright

gleam in his eyes, and a smile playing about his lips.

But soon after they had left him in solitude, a change, a shadow, fell upon his face. His brows knit, and a dark, unpleasing expression came over his features. He took his pipe from his lips presently, set it down on the table, and clasped his hands tightly above his head.

"Oh, confound it all!" he exclaimed to himself. "What a disgusting business the whole thing is! The darling!" His look softened, and his eyes glistened again. "Surely a fellow might be happy! What more need he want? Oh, confound it all—let us have another look at that beastly list!"

He rose suddenly, walked to his writing-table, and from a chaos of motley confusion thereon, he fetched a long blue paper, and returned with it to his chair. He unfolded it: it was covered with ominous looking figures—a long melancholy list of fifties and sixties, and one, two, or even several hundreds, with a name opposite each group—

names, evidently abhorrent unto Godfrey's soul. It made a goodly sum in all; many thousands more than several years' income of the Craig estates.

He frowned darkly as he contemplated them, and muttered execrations below his breath.

"Villains!" he growled, "extortionate rascals! Oh, heavens! what a fool I've been! and now—now, is there no way out of it? no way to escape from this wretched bondage into liberty again? Nothing but debts! debts! and I, virtually the slave of the man who is going to pay them!"

He dashed down the paper, and threw back his head to think again.

He saw two selves before him, and two ways, either of which might be his to follow.

He was his own master, lord of his own estate; and he was not so far gone yet, but that—with exertion—his estate might save him still. He might put his own affairs straight again just now, and be indebted to no man, with a few years of self-denial and effort.

He set himself to contemplate *this* way open to him.

“Defy his uncle, show his mother he meant to arbitrate his own life, marry the girl he loved, and whose love he had won;” and then the picture of his future appeared to him:—

A country life; for many years a very quite home, where economy and self-negation must rule everything. He shivered.

On the other side “the medal”—and he looked there for a change—were, his debts paid by Lord Clarenleigh, and then back to the Guards, to London society and London life, to race-courses, to Richmond dinners, Belgravian ball-rooms, and mornings in Hyde Park, to operas, clubs, and many, many things besides—life eager, turbulent, and excitable, as he had known it until now.

To be exchanged for what?

For the love of one little bright-eyed girl, whose image, rising up now vividly before him, seemed to call him away from his habitual selfishness, to beckon him on to

that other path, and to whisper words to him, of which the repeated burden was,—“Be honest to yourself, and to me.”

“Poor little thing!” he thought. “I believe she is fond of me, and I am sure I should like the life well enough if I could once begin it. It would be much better for me to turn steady, and settle down, if they would only all help me, instead of fighting on the other side. If they would pay the debts, and let me marry her, and let us swim off easy; but they won’t do that. No! And the other alternative—sell out, become a country duffer, give up life—Oh, hang it! it is too soon; a fellow cannot put the halter round his own neck in that sort of way.”

And then he pushed back his hair, and bent over the fire and pondered.

“At all events, I need not do it just yet. I can humbug the old governor a bit, and keep it dark from the lady-mother. They needn’t know anything until the money is paid up, and then they may catch me for

one of their Miss Anybodies, if they can ! No ; I'll just get Trixie to keep it all quiet for a little while, till I come down again, and then I will be as true to her, the darling ! as the magnet to the steel."

And then he threw himself back again, and the memory of her came over him,—of the flushing cheek, of the blue eyes looking up into his,—and his whole countenance softened again, and glowed with passionate tenderness—Godfrey's deeper self speaking up again for the moment, the man he *might* have become—strong to love and strong to do—not the man he was by habit, strong only to desire, indolent to resist, mobile in the hand of destiny and in the mould of association.

Every morning, since she had been at the Craig, Trixie had risen with the sun, and opened her window, to drink in the breeze blowing over the shrubberies and the flowers ; or she had wandered into the garden and brushed off the cobwebs of her unwonted dissipation, in the dewy fragrance

of the morning air. And it had seemed good to her to do so.

It gave her quiet moments, such as Aunt Helen had counselled her to retain all her life long, through life's busiest seasons ; and she had felt ever a sense of innocent, unconscious pleasure as she issued forth to meet the earliest song-birds and the first fresh breath of the morning.

This morning she felt it different,—she scarce knew why. She felt half ashamed of her early rising, her bright child-like enjoyment of the birds, the flowers, and the sunlight was gone from her, as she crept out at the library window on to the lawn, and glanced behind her at the rows of closely-drawn blinds, that spoke every one else in bed.

She ran over the lawn and into the shrubberies, passing the gardeners at their work,—feeling, for the first time, afraid that they should see her,—and then she reached the row of chestnut-trees, where the water of the little lake appeared glistening in the sun. There was a low paling here, and

leaning on it was Godfrey. He came towards her.

"Ah!" he cried, "I have been waiting ever so long, you little lazy, sleepy thing!"

She looked up, blushing and laughing at him. Goff took both her hands in one of his without ceremony, and pushed the broad straw hat that covered her forehead back on to her shoulders, and raised the little face towards his own.

"Trixie," he said, "it is an old, time-worn simile, but you do look this morning fresher than *any* rose, you beautiful darling." He put his arm round her and drew her close.

She did not shrink from him, but she turned her face a little away, and she whispered gravely, as he tried to draw her into his playful mood—

"Do not, dear—no, not now. Godfrey, you know we have so many serious things to talk about. You told me to come——"

"Of course I did, and you came, like a

dear little——" He was outpouring a torrent again.

"No, dear, not that," she said. "We must be serious. Look"—pointing to the paling where he had been standing—"let me lean against that, and have our regular grave talk."

"Oh bother!" exclaimed Goff, as she drew away from him and walked towards the rails. "What have we got to say, Trixie? You haven't changed your mind, have you, since last night?"

She looked up at him as he leant on the topmost bar at her side, bright, handsome, imperious. "I do believe you have," he continued.

"Godfrey!"

"You have *not* then? you dear——" and he was going to be demonstrative again.

"No, Goff," she persisted, stopping him; "no, no—hear me."

"Say you love me then, Trixie." His strong arm was round her again. "Say you love me,—quick."

"Goff, you absurd boy!" and she smiled

up into his face *such* a glory of love and joy.

"Well, what is the matter, then?" he went on. "What is there to be grave over?"

"Godfrey, your mother?" she whispered; "have you told her, dear? And—I am going home to-day," she added, hesitatingly and colouring crimson; "And, Goffy, what am I to say to Aunt Helen?"

Godfrey bit his lip. Her face had drooped as she asked the last question, and she did not see the cloud on his. He looked perplexed for a moment, and then he said, his voice more low and tender than it ever yet had been—

"Trixie—I wonder if you will understand my idea about it? Do you know, I feel, my darling," and his arm tightened round her, "that our love is such a sweet and a beautiful thing, that I cannot bear the thought of making it common talk among them just at present. Could we not keep it, Trixie, a secret treasure, just between you and me?"

She looked quickly up at him.

"Would it be right, Godfrey?"

His face darkened again, an impatient, determined look coming over it, as he went on—

"Nonsense, Trixie! Is this what you call love? Can you not trust me? I want to feel that we belong to each other, and that we confide in each other—you in me, and I in you—without a single tie binding us, from the knowledge of others; nothing but the sweet, sweet truth, that we love. Trixie, Trixie, will you not trust me?"

"Trust you, Godfrey? I *love* you!" she said calmly, as if the last word must embrace the first.

"Then grant my wish," he continued; "let us love with the enjoyment of keeping our love, just a secret between us. I have a reason for asking it," he continued vehemently, "a very great reason to me; but it will only be for a very little while. Do you know, I am going away too, darling. I have got my recall, and I must be off to

London to-morrow. Do you think you can go on loving me, and keeping my secret until I come back again?"

"When, Godfrey, when?"

"In autumn, dearest. It is horrid, isn't it? God knows I wish I need not leave you. God knows I wish it could be all right now, but it cannot, Trixie, it cannot. I told you I had troubles, and I told you you would hate me, and I dare say before long you will."

Hate him! She clung to him now, and raised her face, streaming with hot tears, to his. His words had been fiery, and his tone bitter, and they pierced the poor little heart, and she could not bear it. She gave in, and he gathered her to him, and covered her bright face with his kisses again.

CHAPTER X.

“WHEN SUMMER WAS DONE.”

WHAT had happened to Trixie's home? What had happened to Aunt Helen? The dear old house that the girl had loved so well, and had thought the brightest, happiest home that could be conceived, through all these years till now. What had happened to it?

She came back to realise it was solitary—dismal. The bits of home-life, the little simple pleasures, the boys and their sport, the sea, the garden, and her favourite books,—all had lost their charm, all seemed insipid and dull, and Aunt Helen positively worried her!

The old lady was full of eager curiosity for details of the visit—what they had done? what everybody had said? and above

all, what impression they had formed of the young laird of Craig?

To Aunt Helen he existed as a feudal and political fact, and never presented himself to her imagination in a different light; any more than Trixie appeared to her other than *her* "little girl," a child to be amused and guided, to be carefully kept, in health and comfort, and to be educated in usefulness and truth.

Trixie looked pale, she thought, and was more fractious and silent than usual, and Aunt Helen moralised, in her own well-balanced mind, on the evident effect of gaiety and dissipation.

The visit gave food for controversy between her and Colonel O'Neil for many evenings, as they sat after their early dinner, Aunt Helen knitting in her great arm-chair, eyeing the Colonel with chronic dissatisfaction as he stretched himself indolently on the other side the fireplace.

Formerly, at this hour, if the boys had disappeared, she made Trixie read to her, and Trixie used to like this time. It was

so quiet and cozy in the red parlour, with the warm fire-glow, and the soft lamp-light in winter, or in the ruddy sunset of a long summer's day; and she used to sit at Aunt Helen's feet, the kind hand wandering over her hair, as she read her story, or looked up with some wondering inquiry to Aunt Helen—inquiries often remaining unanswered—while the old lady paused to gaze in silent enjoyment and admiration on the beautiful young face she loved.

Colonel O'Neil generally fell asleep, and Aunt Helen and Trixie had had very pleasant evenings together.

But now it seemed all reversed. Aunt Helen energetically kept the Colonel awake, to talk to her and answer questions; Trixie did not come to sit at her feet, did not bring her book, nor did she nestle up to Aunt Helen in the quiet hour, to prattle out all her confidences, as she had always done till now.

The Colonel talked, warmed and interested like Aunt Helen by the new flood of ideas, and Trixie sat a little away from them,

back from the table on the other side, her book lying idly on her knees, her lips parted, her eyes fixed on her father's face, as he described to Miss Helen those repeated scenes, in which each detail seemed like poisoned food for the fevered life in her heart and brain.

Life external had become a blank ; she lived in memory, in longing, in hope. Every day and every evening seemed the same ; life had become a weary monotony. "And alas !" she thought, "all the months and months that must pass like this, with nothing to feed her heart but the reflection of *him* ever living within her." Night and day he seemed before her, his voice ringing in her ears, calling to her in her sleep, whispering to her words tender and thrilling, as she went to and fro, through all the long, long days. The ache for him was often so weary and so sore, and no one could comfort her, for no one knew.

Aunt Helen and her father seemed never tired of the reminiscences. Every evening they went over them again.

"Yes, he is certainly an agreeable man, Lord Clarenleigh," the Colonel would begin.

"Ah, and Lady Marian can be a pleasant hostess when she chooses," Aunt Helen would reply. "It is a pity she does not return to live entirely at the Craig."

"You see the young man is of age. It must be his home now," answered the Colonel; "and I should doubt his settling there until he marries."

"Likely not," said Aunt Helen. "There is a sadly wandering spirit among our young people in these days, to be sure."

"Well, after all, except in the shooting season, there is not much to attract a young guardsman in a country place like that. The hunting is bad about here, and the society, unless he goes in for Edinburgh gaieties, is limited. Young fellows will knock about nowadays."

"I am sure I hope he will be blessed with a proper-minded young woman for his wife," said Aunt Helen. "Such as he are exposed to many risks in making choice among the young people of his London

world. I take it there are few of them well brought up."

Colonel O'Neil laughed.

"I suspect it is the main chance he must look to," he replied. "They say he is deeply dipped, and the lady of the Craig, whoever she may be, will have to pave the way to the hymeneal altar for herself. 'Tocher,' Miss Helen; isn't that what you call it?"

"Ah, well," said the old lady, "such are the times. It is an ill case, in my opinion, Colonel, when a man wants a wife in his home, and has to think of the tocher first, and the girl afterwards; but it is what the life is making of them all nowadays."

"He is a fine young fellow," continued Colonel O'Neil. "By Jove! he looked as handsome as you could wish to see in that gaudy dress of Leicester's, and our Trixie did not look bad either. Did you, Trix?"

The girl's lips parted to answer him, but no words came. He had conjured up the scene before her as he spoke, and again she felt the fervent gaze of Leicester upon her.

face, and the firm touch of the hand that had clasped hers in the tableaux.

"And the German thing too—it was capital. I did not know you had it in you, Trix. I assure you she made quite a sensation."

Aunt Helen looked proud and pleased. She glanced towards the girl, and Trixie strove to return the bright look in her eyes.

"Come here, darling," said Aunt Helen; and Trixie rose and came to her. "You look tired. Are you not well, Trixie?"

"Quite well, auntie. Why do you ask? I *am* tired," she continued, putting her hand up to her forehead with a wearied gesture. "I think, auntie, I will go to bed."

"Bed! It is early, child."

"Yes; but I think I shall go. I have lost a great deal of sleep, you know, lately," she answered, trying to speak playfully again.

"So you have," said Miss Helen, with a solemn shake of her head. "These gay doings do not suit our little country girl."

It will be a lesson to you, I hope, my child, to teach how much better is our simple and undisturbed life. Early hours, Trixie, and plenty to do, and we shall soon get the colour back in these cheeks again." She drew the girl down, and kissed her tenderly, and patted her cheek, and looked into her face with a gaze full of love and solicitude, and then Trixie escaped.

The old lady sighed as the girl fled from her. "Early hours," she said to herself consolingly, repeating the comfort just to assure her own heart that although she perceived an ailment, she knew a certain cure; "Early hours." And yet she sighed again. She felt vaguely, indefinably, a change, a something,—a shadow that had crept over their clear confidence, and a cloud on the bright joyousness that had gladdened every moment of her existence in the sight of the darling of her heart.

Poor Aunt Helen ! She little knew that the bloom had been kissed off her rose.

CHAPTER XI.

"IN SOLITUDE THE SPARKS ARE STRUCK THAT
BID THE WORLD ADMIRE."

DURING the years while Jim was abroad, while Trixie was growing up, and spending (before the Craig visit) those tranquilly happy evenings at Sea Grange, there were very pleasant evenings passed too in South Castle Street.

There was always Mrs. Lindsay, sitting working by the fire, placid and pleasant to look upon. There was Marjory, with her work-basket, generally neglected by her side, while she conned over long pages of manuscript, tossed to her from time to time as they were covered by a rapid pen. And there, at the round table always consecrated to his service, sat Robert Deane, absorbed for many hours of every evening in his annotations on the classics of Greece. "The

great work" kept for execution under Margie's inspiring eyes, and for refreshment, as Robert used to say, after a weary day's drudgery at his reporting.

Robert was not getting on, but "the great work" was. It had had four years' labour upon it now, and he really thought it would not take above two or three more. His mind was getting on, deepening, strengthening, accumulating gigantic wealth, and his heart was softening, and gaining floods of inner light, but his career was at a standstill. His huge, unpractical mental energies seemed to encumber him, and to be useless for application towards pecuniary success. "Just enough to live upon—enough to scrape on," as he said—that was all he earned with his unmanageable pen from one year's end to another; but Margie was satisfied, and waited.

Jim might come any evening now. He had said he would not telegraph when he landed, but would appear; so evening after evening they expected him.

Till his arrival, the annotations would go

steadily forward, and they were proceeding as usual to-night.

"Look here," Robert said suddenly, "what a splendid thought this is!" and he read to her in the original, his words flowing rich and liquid. It was an outburst of national pride and enthusiasm from some old immortal Greek, glorying in the undying splendour of the native Athens.

"Athens, diviner yet,
Gleams with its crest of volumes
On a mount of diamonds set."

Margie came and leant over him, and read the lines again, following his finger as he traced for her.

"How have you put it, Robert?" she said when they had read on through the page together.

He turned to his paper, and read the translation.

"Surely, some one has echoed the idea," she continued,— "let me see where it is?—speaking of Athens. I know the thought comes in in a poem I have read—do you remember it? It begins—

'Within the surface of Time's fleeting river.'"

"I know—I know," cried Robert, as she paused to recall the words. "I remember the lines quite well, they go on so: it is a description of immortal Athens:

'Within the surface of Time's fleeting river
Thy wrinkled image lies, as then it lay,
Immovable and quiet and for ever,—
It trembles, but it cannot pass away!
The voices of thy bards and sages thunder
(With an earth-awakening blast,
Through the caverns of the past,
Religion veils her eyes, oppression shrinks aghast.)
A winged sound of joy and love and wonder,
Which soars where expectation never flew,
Rending the veil of space and time asunder!
One ocean feeds the clouds and streams and dew,
One sun illumines heaven,—one spirit vast
With life and love makes chaos ever new,
As Athens doth the world with her delights renew.'

His dark eyes glowed with enthusiasm as he quoted the passage. "Yes," he said, "it echoes the thought. I am so glad you reminded me of it, Margie. It sets me thinking. I have an idea, I shall just write it down, and dream over it to-night, and you shall have the result to-morrow."

He scribbled the original Greek lines on a slip of paper, and put them in his pocket.

"One sun illumines—and one smile the

soul inspires," he repeated, turning to her as she knelt by him, and pushing the hair gently back from her forehead, and then he continued quoting,—

"She met me upon 'life's rough way,
And lured me sweetly on; as night by day,
Winter by spring, or sorrow by soft hope;
Led into light, life, peace."

His voice sank into a murmur as he rested his eyes on her full of grave, wistful tenderness—"on to success," she answered cheerfully. He shook his head.

"Not that yet, I fear; but I think," he added, brightening up as if at some thought that bade him forget his poverty and cares, "I can make something of *this*; the ideas come to me. I will not tell you them, Margie. I should like it to come all fresh upon you, when the poem is finished. Yes, it is beautiful, it is beautiful—glorious! Oh, Athens, city and parent of thought!" and his eyes wandered dreamily, and he smiled with a wonderful light on his shadowy face, as if he indeed saw a fair vision of the city of knowledge, and as if it was delightful

to look upon it. Suddenly his countenance fell.

"Oh!" he exclaimed bitterly, "I cannot do it to-night. I have that horrible article to write for to-morrow's paper, and the detestable little devil will be there for it in the morning, and it must be ready. Oh!" he groaned, "ten and sixpence! I must have the money, and there, my poem, Margie, it cannot be."

"Never mind, dear." She smoothed his hair lightly, and met the strong dark face as it was raised to hers, with a smile of encouragement and hope. "Never mind, write the article first, Robert, and the poem afterwards; there will be time for both."

"Do you think the muse will still sing, Margie, at half-past twelve to-night, when I have strangled her with statistics, and wearied her out with certain sewerage facts? And yet—and yet——"

"Well, dear?"

"The poem might be immortal,—the article will bring me ten and sixpence and then die,—there will be nothing worth any one's

while to know,—just so much of the morning paper covered, and so many minutes of so many civic paterfamilias' after-breakfast leisure amused. And the poem, Margie——”

“But we must have the articles as well, Robert.”

“Of course we must;—all I mean is, that I do think the crowd and confusion of passing perishing literature in these days leaves no room in men's minds, no time in their lives, no money in their purses, for writings of greater or more lasting kinds. There is no use in an author's being great in these days, much better for him if he be small. He comes down the easier to the level of the demand upon him, and he wins his profits with labour of a minimum degree.”

“Do not be bitter, Robert,—patience, dear.”

“Bitter, Margie! it is enough to make any man bitter. I feel that if you were not sweetening every moment for me, my failures and impatience would make life a very *Marah* stream.”

"I shall do so always, Robert, till success comes,—and it *will* some day."

"It is better to try great things and fail in them, after all," he answered her, "than to stay at small things, and be vain of fools' easy laurel crowns."

"Still, dear, I would not have you disdain small things. You keep gazing at great achievements, Robert, and they dazzle you with their brightness, and so it often seems to me, that when you come to the exertion of a daily life, to small works to be greatly done, you have lost the power of seeing them, and their value and aim have disappeared to your eyes."

"Value and aim of contemptible penny-a-lining literature, Margie!"

"Yes—of the tools in your hands,—of the voice, however humble, that you *have* got, by which to speak on things of practical life to men. It is a pity you despise the work that is given to you, Robert."

"The drudgery," he groaned, "the monotony of it is insupportable!—providing, at so many pennies per diem, daily provision

for a passing newspaper demand, or chronicling, for the sake of my own dinner, rubbish that men have talked just to win theirs. It seems all work and struggle, and life going on, and nothing tangible to show for the work, save the money spent as it is won. I would live, Margie, to work the thing that is immortal, not work just merely to live. Ah! life is a bitter thing!"

"I think you are needlessly bitter about it, Robert. I forget,—let me see, what was it Jim used to say on that subject? I fancy he had thought it all out, you know, before he gave up his beloved ideal of the Bar, and went off to the tea-business. He said it came to him to feel that work done well,—however humble, however unintellectual it may be,—makes the man, and forms the character, out of which springs the life history, with all its results. He used to say we never stop in our character-making, and that intellect ripens best in a life that is all effort, all self-denying, all devotion, towards a given aim. Jim is what you would call a marvellously unerratic man, I fancy. I

wish he would arrive, I am sure you could talk all these things over with him, Robert, so much better than with me. I know he always said work was never wasted."

"Jim?—yes," said Robert gloomily.

"Yes, dear Jim! Robert!" cried Margie, astonished as she saw his expression, "do you not want Jim home again?"

Robert looked up into her face.

"Do you know, Margie, what is the first thing Jim will say to me, when he does come home?"

"No. What should he say?"

"*'Deane, leave my house.'* That is what he will say, and justly too."

"Robert!" Margie glanced at Mrs. Lindsay. She had dropped into a doze, so she ventured to creep shyly close to Robert, and to nestle her hand in his, and to lay her head down on his shoulder.

"Dearest," she whispered to him, "do not talk so, Robert, I cannot bear it!"

He put his arm round her, but he did not answer at once. He was dreaming away from her now, for his poetic power had come

back to him as she spoke, and it seemed to flow smoothly over his spirit in a gentle rhythm.

It seemed rising within him, echoing through the cells of his heart, ready to burst into speech, but "Margie! Margie!" were the only words that broke from him, murmured over her head in low tones, rough and hoarse from his deep emotion.

Late that night he was alone in his lodgings, his shabby, grimy room. The fire had burnt itself away, the candle was waxing low, and Deane sat in his chair, his left hand buried in his masses of black hair, his pen now balanced, as he pondered in thought, now driving across the paper as stanza after stanza came to him.

Torrents of strong, passionate language flowed upon the page, and the poem grew apace as the candle sank and spluttered, and the "article" lay still undone.

The light was exhausted before he was; the poem was unfinished still; the flame danced up brilliantly for a moment, and

then vanished away. He was left in darkness, chattering with cold, hungry and tired, and he had no more candle to light.

But the poem wrestled still unfinished in his mind, and he leant back, regardless of darkness, regardless of cold, hunger, and fatigue, and the words and hot feelings struggled within him, till at length order came, created out of chaos, and the perfect beauty of the thought he had pursued rose up like a goddess within his soul.

She bent over him, and caressed him in spirit—his glory, his Idea; her form seemed Margie's, her countenance was fair and tender, and her voice was as the whisperings of wisdom and love; and he sank away into the sound, and fell asleep in his weariness, alone there in his chair, wrapt in a dream of heavenly happiness, amid the cold, and discomfort, and poverty that surrounded him in his external world.

CHAPTER XII.

JIM.

THE summer was coming on apace, and lamp-lit evenings were over. Trixie sat in the bow-window of the summer drawing-room, where the family used to migrate when the cosy warmth of Miss Helen's room was no longer required.

She was pretending to read, but in reality she was doing nothing, only gazing down the road towards the gate, in that feverish condition of impossible expectation, into which the heart grows sometimes as we live through a period of a hope deferred.

She always felt some one *might* come along there of an evening. Who could tell? Something might bring him to the Craig. The evenings passed away, however; the

grey summer twilight waned again and again into night, and she gazed down the avenue in vain.

But this evening the shadows had scarcely deepened, and the weary sense of disappointment had but just begun to creep on, when she saw clearly a figure coming along under the lime-trees, walking with a quick, eager step.

Trixie sprang to her feet and looked again,—too short for him by far, and yet not one of the boys. A figure she thought she knew,—erect, about the middle height, strong built and firm knit, walking rapidly towards the house.

He was making for the front door, but just as he reached the bit of grass where Miss Helen's flower-beds began, he caught sight of her, changed his course, came straight across the lawn, and then in another moment, in the summer twilight, standing just below the window, looking up at her with a kind gleam in his eyes and a ruddy flush on his brown cheek, was "Cousin Jim."

"Trixie!"

"Dear old Jim!"

Their hands met for a moment in a warm, tight clasp.

"Hurrah!" came a shout from the shrubbery somewhere, and Albert and Ru burst from their ambush and were wringing Jim's hand in ecstatic glee.

"Here you are, old boy! That's capital! Come at last, splendid!"

"Halloo, Jim!" A volley of joyful acclamations came in ringing school-boy tones. He turned on them with a bright smile.

"Here I am," he said. "Albert—Ru—you don't mean to say it! Why, what big fellows you have grown! And Trixie!"

He looked up again at her as she leant out of the window.

"I suppose I may not say *you* are grown too, may I? You have done with that sort of thing long ago?"

"Ain't she grown up a swell?" said Albert.

"Albert!" expostulated Trixie.

Jim laughed quietly, and surveyed her with his cool glance again; his eyes rested on her just for a moment, and then returned to the boys again.

"Have you kept up your cricket?" asked Rupert.

"I dare say I've not forgotten it, but I have not been in a climate for that sort of thing, Ru,—however, we shall see."

"Oh, I dare say you've not forgotten the long bowl; you were a good hand at that. And my! how you used to keep Al and me fielding the live-long day. We don't field much now, I can tell you, master James. Al is first and I am second in the Academy eleven, and I should not wonder if we could show you a thing or two."

"I have no doubt of it," said Jim. "Are you alone, Trixie?" he continued, looking up at her again, and then past her into the room beyond. "There is some one else I want to see."

"Ah, Aunt Helen," she replied. "She is in her own room, Jim. She has expected you every moment of these last three days.

Go round to her. I will not even tell her you have come."

"And she is well?"

His eyes softened as he asked the question, looking straight and frankly up into hers.

"Wonderfully. Go round, Jim—do not keep her waiting another minute."

He turned from the window, and went into the house, the boys rushing after him, pouring out questions and important confidences the whole way; Trixie was left alone, free to return to herself again.

For five minutes, for the first time in as many weeks, she had lost the sense of herself and her secret burden; it had dropped from her for one passing moment of intense relief. Then she had almost forgotten Jim's arrival, she dropped her head idly on her hand again, and was gazing dreamily along the road, still feeling as if some one else *might* come.

A few minutes, and the door opened behind her; she was roused, and sprang up to encounter Aunt Helen's face, smiling and

radiantly happy, as she came in, leaning on her nephew's arm.

"Trixie," she called to the girl, glancing the while towards the other face so beloved by her side, "you have met already! Trixie, here he is! here he is! And so strong and well, and just himself again! Oh children!" she continued, her eyes filling with tears, and her lips quivering, "Oh, children, I am *so* happy!"

"Dear Aunt Helen," murmured Trixie, taking the feeble old hand in hers, while Jim looked into the wrinkled face with eyes as full of warmth and feeling as if it were the youngest and loveliest face on earth.

"Come, children," continued the old lady, catching Trixie's hand, and drawing her with them, "come with me to my room, and let me look at you, my own two."

She turned, still leaning on Jim's arm, and crossed the lobby to the red parlour.

"Sit down, James," she said, when she had reached her chair. "Let me look at you, and you too, Trixie. Sit by him. Are you not glad to see him home?"

"Very glad, auntie. Dear Jim!" and she held out her hand again to her cousin.

He took it and wrung it warmly; he seemed overcome with the tenderness of the old lady's greeting, so unwonted a display of feeling it was from her; and her excitement seemed almost to perplex him.

"Oh, I am so glad," she went on, "so glad! I scarcely hoped to live to see this day. I am growing old, you know, James, very old, and I am anxious that many things should be very quickly settled now, before I am called away."

He sat down by her, and looked with grave kindness into her face.

"There is this place, you know, James, and so many many things." She took up her knitting, which seemed to compose her a little, and then—"There is her," she continued, nodding towards Trixie, "of course I am anxious, Jim, very anxious; and I kept fearing you might not come in time."

Jim looked at Trixie again inquiringly and for explanation, as his aunt spoke, and

their eyes met; there was only warm affection, not a shade of admiration in his, he was thinking of so many things, and little Trixie was merely one among many home-ties to him. He still had his broken sixpence somewhere, but he had forgotten it, and crowds of very varied events had expelled, since they had parted, the memory of their Halloweens.

He was no judge of feminine loveliness, this practical Jim; not accustomed to criticize it, and ignorant of a conventional standard. He had seen few women through all these years, and thought little about them. In a general way, he imagined they were *all* beautiful; and when he did meditate thereon, it was in a distant chivalrous sort of manner, as if of old half-forgotten bits of poetry that had faded out of the influence of his present life.

Indeed, "Mary Stuart" lived more for him as a reality, when he had time to think about her, than any woman alive, and "Grace Darling," and certain visionary heroines of his boyish days; but of late years even

they were fading away. He had not the remotest conception of *that* part, to subvert, to sweeten, or to embitter, which some woman plays in most men's lives.

To him career was sufficient aim, success was all happiness. To be aimless was disgrace, to fail was all sorrow; and this, tempered with warm affection towards home and family and ennobled by high standards of moral good, comprehended the entire scope of Jim's present thoughts and character.

"I must not stay," he said presently. "I must go back to them all at home. I only arrived this afternoon, you know, and this is but a run, Aunt Helen, to say 'how d'ye do' to you."

"True," she answered, "but you will come back to-morrow, Jim. You must come, and have a long quiet chat with me."

"I hope to have many a chat," he replied. "I am my own master, you know. I have nothing to do for the next three months, and I mean to spend a good many hours of it out here with you."

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"That is my own boy!" she said proudly. "Jim, I always said you were the best of the lot."

"I do not know about that," he said, rising with a laugh. "Good night, aunt; it is pleasant to be saying it to you once more."

"Good night, my boy, and God bless you. Let me have another look before you go. He has not turned out an ugly fellow, Trixie, has he now?"

Jim coloured a little under his tawny moustache, but looked down at her amused.

"They do not choose me for my beauty out in India," he said. "We have two wonderful fellows in the house to keep up our credit in that line."

"Oh, he is not bad, he is not bad," said Aunt Helen, in a proud, but broken voice. "Firm, clear cut, good Lindsay features; and your grandfather had just that auburn-brown hair. They did not wear moustaches in his time, though."

"Did they not?" said Jim, pulling his,

and looking somewhat abashed by her criticism. "One gets to do it somehow by instinct in these days ; every one wears them out in our part of the world. Good night again, aunt." He shook her hand, and then turned to Trixie.

"I will go to the gate with you, Jim."

"Will you ? Come along." And they left the room.

"How like old times to be sure !" he exclaimed when they were out on the gravel together. "You always used to walk to the gate with me, Trixie, when I was starting off, on Saturday nights, to run home."

"So I did."

They were walking down under the lime-trees now, and he looked round at her ; she was nearly as tall as he was, and her fair girlish face (pale and pensive, not fresh and unclouded, as when Goff Hamilton first beheld it) was turned towards him. They took mental note of each other.

"Trixie, I cannot make pretty speeches, you know," said Jim, "but you have not turned out just what I imagined you. I

have a photograph of you somewhere, in a pinafore, with long straggling hair."

"Have I not? Confess your disappointment, Jim; I shall not be offended."

They had reached the gate, and he stopped to bid her good night. He turned and looked into her face, and he met the clear depth of her blue eyes looking full into his, and his gaze lingered on her.

"You remind me of something," he said. "What is it? Those pale, thorny, wild roses, Trixie, we used to pick in the summer holidays in the woods beyond Roslyn."

She blushed hotly; some one else had applied to her, not long ago, the "time-honoured simile" as he had said, "of a rose."

"I haven't said anything wrong, have I?" he asked, for her colour had deepened, and then faded quite away again as he spoke. "You know I am a barbarian, and know nothing of young ladies' talk."

She laughed lightly, and let him take her hand.

"We must teach you, Jim; we must not

let you be a barbarian—not that I think you are one, however.”

And she did not think so; she rather liked his looks: he was not handsome, but his features were well cut, as Aunt Helen said, and the long brown moustache he wore without any whiskers suited the contour of his face. His figure was strong and firm, and his manner kind, although indifferent to her. It was not what she had been accustomed to, and Trixie liked it.

“Come back to-morrow, Jim.”

“Yes. I have lots of things to do and business to settle, that will keep me occupied for some few days, but I shall manage to come out for an hour in the evening, I dare say. Good night, Trixie.”

“Good night.”

Next day he came again. Trixie was sitting under the trees in the old garden. Jim came along by the raspberry and currant bushes, and walked out upon her on the terrace before she knew that he was there, and she looked up, and felt glad to see him

coming to break the monotony of her thoughts.

He came and stood by her, and looked down upon her as she worked.

"Aunt Helen said I should find you here," he said. "I have been sitting some time with her, and now I thought I would come and pay you a visit."

"I have been trying to realise all day, Jim, that you have come, and I could not. Now I see you again I begin to take in the idea."

"It is a very pleasant idea to me," he answered. "Where are the boys?"

"Not come home from school yet; it is only four o'clock. Are you tired of my society already, Jim?"

He smiled, but did not respond to her little sally. He was looking round him, and recognising the familiar points in the scene.

"The garden is not much changed," he said.

"Nothing is changed, I think," exclaimed Trixie quickly; "nothing ever

does change in this life of ours;—it is all just the same.”

“You are changed for one, I think,” he answered.

“Oh yes, of course, and so are you, and the boys have grown bigger, and Greville and Perce have gone away; but still it is all a dead-level, Jim—year after year the same.”

“Life seems going on apace to me,” he said, looking curiously at her, as her face was raised to his, flushed with her impetuous feeling.

“Yes, to you, I daresay; it always does to boys. But for us—for me, Jim, nothing—nothing to be done, but stay behind and wait.”

“Behind whom?” he asked with practical directness, wondering why she coloured again.

“Behind all of you. You men seem to go travelling about, here and there, all over the world, and, wherever you are, you have every week important business to call you somewhere else; and here we stay and nothing happens, but just we stay and wait.”

Jim sat down by her.

"In a restless life like mine, Trixie, it seems pleasant enough to conceive an existence where one was left tranquilly at home. I can imagine life being a pleasant thing in this old place, without ever going to the other side that sea."

He leant back on his elbow against the tree, beneath which they were sitting, and looked round at her in silence for a minute or two.

She felt his thoughtful eyes upon her, and she bent over her work; she had a feeling as if they could read, without effort, into the restlessness of her heart, and she shrank from the calm strength, cool and scrutinizing, that spoke in his gaze. She changed the subject suddenly.

"Jim, how enchanted Marjory must be! Why has she not come out with you to-day?"

Jim's face grew grave. "I do not know that Margie is very glad to see me home," he said; "my mother is, but Margie——"

"Margie! Why, Jim, she has been looking forward to nothing else for weeks but your coming."

"I do not know why I should speak to you about it," he replied; "but Marjory and I have had a difference already, Trixie. There is a point on which we cannot agree."

She looked up at him now, and saw that his face was full of pain.

"Jim, what can there be between you and Margie?"

"Nothing between us," he answered gravely—"nothing between us but love. There is some *one* between us, Trixie, however, and one for whom my own feeling makes it the more difficult to act. I do not know why I speak to you about it," he said again; "I do not generally talk about my own affairs. You know to whom I allude?" he added.

"Dear Margie!" whispered Trixie. "Jim"—she looked up into his face, her pleading eyes looking close into his—"Jim," she said, "do not be hard with them."

"I am not hard," he answered gravely; "but I see only one thing to be done. I cannot make any compromises, Trixie, be-

tween right and wrong, and my duty is clear to me. She must give him up."

"Dear Margie!—but she *loves* him, Jim."

"I do not know what love is according to your thinking, Trixie. If it is a process that subverts reason, and right, and common sense——"

"Love!" exclaimed Trixie passionately, "love has nothing to do with these kind of things."

He looked at her oddly for a moment. "Comfortable state of life it must be," he said drily, "when one has bartered these available faculties for the sentiment which you seem to admire!"

"Jim, you do not know what you are talking about!"

"I daresay not," he answered. "I am no novel reader, Trixie, and I have never been in love."

She looked wonderingly up at him. What an infant he seemed to her in the experiences of life!

"Never been in love!"

"Deane and I are to talk it over this

evening," he continued, "but I see only one impending result."

"Poor Margie!" murmured Trixie again.

"Margie has not parted with all *her* common sense, I think," said Jim. "I fancy she will see things in their true light."

"Poor dear Margie!" And then there was a silence between them. Presently Trixie looked up.

"Jim," she said, "I wonder if you are the hardest hearted man that ever was created."

He laughed a quiet little laugh to himself, as if some pleasant memory had come to him as she spoke.

"I know that you have home affections, and that you are very fond of us all, and that sort of thing, but I do not think you have a grain of the romantic in your whole composition. You could annihilate your own life, and all of ours as well, if you once realised that was right. Yes—you are the hardest man conceivable. What are you laughing at, Jim?" she added indignantly.

He turned straight round upon her, and looked up into her face with a bright, softened smile.

"I was thinking, Trixie, that you are not much altered after all. Do you remember how you used to stand, with your arms tight round my neck at the gate down there, and call me 'the obstinatest boy that ever lived,' because I would go home at the hour I had intended?"

"Yes," sighed Trixie, "you were always just the same. I hate it, Jim—I hate dogmatic, straight-going people."

"What sort of people do you like, Trix?" he asked, looking up at her again.

"I do not know. Let me see. I like big, vehement sort of people, who never know what they are going to say, and what they are going to do, and who say and do everything when you do not expect it. You are too straight-going for me, Jim. I am an erratic sort of person myself, and I like that kind best."

"It is well to know your views clearly,

Trixie," he answered, laughing, "before we start upon our new acquaintance."

"Oh, but, Jim—what have I said? Of course I like *you*. Why, what would become of us all, if there were no people like Margie and you, who always go straight. Why, the world would tumble to pieces if everybody were like me and——"

She stopped, for the name she had never spoken to him had trembled on her lips.

"Why, Jim, you are not offended—of course you know I am fond of you."

He laughed out, and looked provokingly indifferent, and at that moment Colonel O'Neil approached them, and Jim rose from his seat.

"Do not move, James," said the Colonel. "It is a terribly hot day. I will come and sit with you. I just wanted a chat, and we could not have it better than here. Look—I want your opinion on this investment in foreign consols. How do you think 'Tea' is going to keep up?"

And he and Jim plunged into discussions together, and Trixie had to sit there.

working in silence, while Jim talked on to her father with vigorous and eager interest, never once turning his eyes upon her face, but discoursing as if his life centred in tea, prices, and consols.

Yet he was not uninteresting to her, not dry and uninviting in his character, for all his love of consols. He had warmed up often into bright bits of light and colour while they had talked together, and Trixie felt it might become a keen interest to her, to call up that glow into his cool speeches and to dive below the stern crust of his habitual self-control.

CHAPTER XIII.

“MY HOPES THAT FOUNDERED—FREIGHT AND
BARK.”

A FEW hours later, on the same evening, in the sitting-room at Deane's lodgings, he and Jim were together in grave discourse.

Robert was smoking, looking dark and dissatisfied, but assuming an air of ill-affected indifference, as he leant back in his chair.

Jim stood very upright on the rug, his arms folded, the outline of his features looking firm and indomitable as Robert looked up into his face.

An open letter lay on the table, besides a confusion of books and manuscripts, and every sort of literary work.

“There is the letter—you may read it

for yourself," Robert was saying, with much temper in his voice. "I am glad I have broken with the fellow—he is a nasty scribbling snob."

Jim took up the letter and read it gravely in silence. Then he glanced round the room, and down at the huge, powerful proportions of his friend.

All was just as he had left it four years ago, only Robert, if anything, looked poorer in the surroundings of his home.

"Robert," he said presently, "it cannot go on, you know. You are not conquering life; you are letting life conquer you."

"Am I?" said Robert darkly. "Go on, Jim, say all you have to say; I know what it is well enough."

"You throw your livelihood away, Deane. Look at this appointment—gone again! What do you mean to do?"

"God knows!" said Deane recklessly.

"I suppose this is what you have been about these four years—the old story!—getting work and quarrelling with it; that is about all you have done."

"I have done a little more besides that," said Robert, glancing towards his table, groaning under manuscripts of many kinds, "but I do not know how I am to make bread and butter out of it. I am sorry I have lost that appointment though, for I have not another paper to look to. I've been about the round of them all, and they know, every one of them, that they cannot depend upon me for an hour. They will have nothing to say to me now, Jim; and for the matter of that, I suppose, neither will you."

Jim looked into his face, gloomy and shadowed as it was, and his task was difficult to him. He loved Deane as strongly as he loved (as yet) any human being.

"You know what I have to say, Deane," he said bitterly. "My mother and I have talked it over, and she thinks as I do. It cannot go on. We cannot let her waste the best years of her life on a man who will not work for her——"

"Go on, Jim," cried Deane passionately; "finish your sentence. On a worthless

vagabond, you mean ; a useless, cumbersome fellow, who cannot make any use of his own faculties."

"Whose genius is great, but whose resolution is *nil*, Deane. That is all I have to say. Oh ! when will you learn," he went on, "that the only thing that succeeds in this world is singleness of devotion and concentration of power ?"

"By heavens, Jim, I cannot stand it!" exclaimed Robert, springing up. "To have you, who I taught and mastered as a boy, come here after four years to find me struggling on the same path, and to feel the right to lecture and to preach to me—I cannot stand it! I'm off, Jim. Do not be afraid about your sister ; she shall not be troubled with me again. I am off—no more ado about it. You need not say more. You shall be well rid of me by to-morrow."

He began hurrying about the room, collecting his possessions together, piling up books and papers and manuscripts in a confused heap as he spoke.

"In God's name, Deane, what are you

doing?" said Jim. "Sit down, and listen to me."

"I have listened to you long enough," answered the other, hot and impetuous. "I know what you have to say, and I knew it before you came; and the only thing I have been a fool in is in having waited to hear it. I quite agree with you, Jim; I quite agree with you. I am no fit choice for your sister, or for any woman in the world, and I must give her up. You will not have to tell me twice. But,—I cannot stay here without her, so I am going away."

"Going where, Deane? For mercy's sake, man, do be calm. Come and talk to me, and tell me your plans. Remember," he added, his voice full of strong feeling, "remember, Robert,—long before you were my sister's lover you were my friend."

Deane came up to him, and clasped his hand, his great dark eyes gleaming, and the knots and veins on his forehead starting out with emotion under his shaggy hair.

"Boy, boy!" he cried, "you are well-meaning; you are a right-doing fellow; you

are steady as a rock, Jim ; you will succeed. But there are things you do not know about yet, lad ; and I cannot hear you speak in your cut-and-dry way."

"I wish to speak kindly, Deane."

"I know you do ; for you're a kindly lad. But, good God ! what do you know of a soul like mine ? What do you know of the love that takes a man, and sways him, and tears him, for the sake of a little bit of a thing like that sister of yours—God bless her ! Wrenches a man, I tell you, boy, and leaves him weak and unresisting as a child. And what do you know more of the *life* that is in me—the burning, turbulent thing that floods over me, and must call out in language of its own, and utter at its own time—the lion thing in me that will not obey ? Boy ! its voice is poetry, its kingdom is idea. I've never caught it, ye tell me ! I've never *reined* and bent it to my will. It is a wild, untrammelled thing, but I love it ; I love it better than bread and life, and the perishing things in the mouth of man. I love it, James, better than I love your sister herself,

and she knows it. She will bid me God speed now I am going away. She knows it, and she loves my muse with me."

Jim, cool, self-contained, and practical, stood looking at him, and strove, by rolling back his memory to his earliest and most romantic boyhood, to enter into this harangue.

"We shall all bid you God speed, my friend," was all he could think to say.

"She knows," continued Robert vehemently. "She will send me away; she would rather I went, and lived, nay, died, for my goddess—died of starvation for want of a crust of bread—than have me here drivelling my powers away for nothing."

"I think Margie would have you different in some things, Deane, if she could."

"God made me, James, and I cannot unmake myself; she knows that too. She took me, knowing all I am. Destiny, fate, tossing us everywhere, we cannot make better of ourselves than we are."

"We can make anything of ourselves we choose," Jim answered. "I think *ourselves*

are just given us to be moulded and tutored into what *we*, not chance, would have our lives to be."

"Your old philosophies, Jim. You are not cured of them yet. Well! I have done for myself now, at all events, in this city, and I must even take this *myself* away with me, and see what I can do elsewhere."

"Will you not let these things alone, Deane, and come and sit down and talk to me?"

"No; I am packing. I am off to-morrow by the break of day. It is no use—the game is up—a man need not linger on a battle-field when his defeat is completed. I shall start to-morrow morning."

"In heaven's name, where, Deane?"

"To London—anywhere—I do not care."

"Have you any money?" asked Jim, hesitatingly, half ashamed to put the question.

Deane pulled an old silk purse out of a drawer, and flung it upon the table. "A matter of some twenty sovereigns in there. I got it for the last two articles they took

from me in *Blackwood*. They would have taken any number more, I believe, but I was sick of the subject, and could not take it back into my head again. I wish you would go, Jim. I want to get on with this business, and I would do it better without you."

His back was turned to Jim as he spoke, and he was tugging at an old travelling-bag, crammed away under the writing-table.

Jim had been writing on a piece of paper during his last remarks, and rolling something carefully up in it, and now he possessed himself of the purse that Deane had flung down, and quite unobserved by his friend, he inserted his folded packet quietly into its recesses.

Robert stood up and faced him just as he completed this act. They regarded each other in silence for a moment, then Jim held out his hand.

"Good-bye, Robert."

"Good-bye, boy," said the other. "You have done your duty. God helping me, I'll try to do mine."

"Good-bye," repeated Jim wistfully. "Deane," he added, turning at the doorway, "you will come and see Marjory again."

The other had given no message, or sent any words of farewell.

"I shall see your sister, James," replied Robert gravely. "I know her habits perhaps better than you do, and I shall bid her good-bye before I go. Say nothing to her," he added hotly, "let me tell her of my intention myself."

"Very well. God bless you, Robert, I don't know what it may cost *her*; but I know what it costs me to drive you thus away."

"It is not you, Jim; it is the spirit that is within me—the devil, I suppose. Good-bye, lad."

Jim looked round regretfully at him again, as he stood, huge, rugged, and untameable, in the midst of his confusion of goods and possessions; and then, as Robert glanced up almost impatiently at him, he turned and went away.

CHAPTER XIV.

“BID ME GOD SPEED.”

THE sun was rising over Edinburgh, wrapping her fair spires and columns in a soft summer morning glow ; kissing the bits of emerald gardens that nestled in the rugged crevices of the old Rock ; tipping the battlements of the Castle and the promontories of its foundations with a golden glory, as Robert Deane, wallet in hand, and slender fortune in his pocket, turned round the corner of the Register Office, and took his way along Prince's Street, towards the west.

He reached the corner of Castle Street, opposite the house he sought, and he looked up towards the windows, where the curtains were still closely drawn. Then he sat down upon the curb-stone of the railings, and

waited. He set his bag beside him, he folded his arms, leant back his head, turned his eyes upwards towards the old fortress on 'the rock—and he waited. He was not impatient. Thoughts came flooding over him. Fancies, memories, and associations far without the limits of his own one narrow sphere of human life; thoughts rising wildly luxuriant, of times coming, and times long gone by; history feeding richly his soaring idea; the beauty, radiant and untarnished of the morning, tuning his spirit to sing.

And he was not impatient while he paused thus on the threshold of his journeyings.

At length the bells of St. Giles' rang out their merry peal, and told the world of Edinburgh that it was six o'clock; and just at that moment, Robert, turning his eyes from the Castle, saw that a blind on the upper storey had been raised, and immediately afterwards the window was thrown open.

Margie appeared, and he beheld her up

above him, her face turned away, looking across the housetops, towards the horizon of the sunrise, her brown hair glistening in the morning light.

She did not observe him, but if *he* could have seen into her heart from where he stood, he would have read his own name there, engraved strong and deep ; and if he could have caught the first whisperings of her spirit, as they floated upwards, pure as the breezes that carried them to heaven, he would have heard again his own name, murmured in accents of supplication, earnest and sincere.

Presently a low whistle stole up to her ear, and she started, and looked down towards him. She met his eyes with a bright smile of surprise, and he beckoned to her. She turned quickly from the window, and in another moment she had appeared at the street door.

She had put her bonnet on, thinking that he would wish her to go out with him ; for often of a lovely summer morning, during these years of their engagement, he had

come and fetched her, and taken her round the Calton Hill, or out on the slopes of the Salisbury Craigs, to drink the keen air, blowing fresh from the Forth, and to sit by the Holy Well.

So she came smilingly out to him now.

A glance at his face instantly sobered hers. She knew every look so well; every light and every shadow that played over that changeful countenance, had its reflection in her own, and she looked up at him now in questioning silence, as he stood by the doorstep, with that earnest sympathy expressed in her eyes that she knew suited his darker moods.

"Come with me," he said slowly, and he put his hand upon her shoulder, and drew her gently with him across the street. He picked up his bag from where it lay by the curb-stone, and then he led her down into Prince's Street, and over the way into the gardens, where they had sat together so many hours of summer mornings, and in the gloaming of so many even-tides.

"Sit down, Margie," he said, and he sat

by her, and set down his bag on the ground again.

"Robert," she asked at length, "what is it?"

"Margie," he answered, turning upon her almost fiercely, in his effort to be strong and self-controlled, "I have come to bid you farewell."

Her hand was thrust into his, and he caught it fast and tight. She turned her eyes upon him, and looked into the dark depths of his, and met in them nothing but despair and gloom.

"Farewell, Robert?"

"Yes, child, I am going. It is no use, Margie. James spoke bitter words to me last night, and in God's name I swear he shall never speak such words again."

"James!" exclaimed Margie, and an angry flush lit up the wonted tranquillity of her countenance. "James! he dared?—to you?"

"Hush, hush, Margie," Robert answered. "Do not waste vain words. James was right. I am a worthless vagabond, I am

unworthy of you, and I am going out into the only place for such as me."

"Where?" she cried to him. "Oh, Robert! Robert!" And her voice broke into a wail of passionate feeling. "Robert, do not leave me. Where are you going? My own—what right had he to come between us? Oh, Robert!" She threw her arms round him, and buried her face in his shoulder. "Do not leave me!" she cried. "Oh, James, how cruel! How could he! how could he!"

"He was right," said Robert firmly. "Look at me, what have I in this life to offer you? Look at my coat, it is threadbare, and I have not wherewith to buy another. Look at that bag, Margie," he continued, striking at it with his foot, "it contains all my worldly goods. What kind of fortune is it to offer to share with you?"

She raised her head, and looked into his face again. Threadbare he was, and with a look of reckless poverty growing in his appearance, his hair shaggy and neglected, falling over his brow. But a gleam of

bright and tender pride lit up her face as she looked at him, and she dropped her head again and murmured—

"What do I wish you to give me but yourself, your love, and your confidence, Robert? Oh, we were so happy, why did he drive you away?"

"He is right, I tell you, child. It is of no use; there is no settling for a man like me. There is only one place for me, and there I must go."

"Where?" she cried again.

"Out on the face of the earth, Margie, to wander up and down like a vagabond, as I am, and to seek just my morsel of bread."

"Robert, Robert, I cannot let you go!"

"I am going," he answered firmly; "I am going."

Then she knew it was useless, she need plead with him no more—he was going from her. She clung to him in mute agony, and hid her face and her tears, and stilled her heart to pray.

"Have you nothing to say to me?" he muttered presently. "No word to take

with me, Margie, perhaps to help me through, till I come back again,—perhaps to be the last I shall hear from you on earth ? ”

She raised her eyes, as he said this, and clinging to him, looked, not at him, but away at the bright blue horizon of heaven, where the roofs and the steeples of the old town were glistening, like the city of Promise, in a glory of gold.

But she saw them not. She saw only her own life gone from her, and she knew it must go. She saw a vista of endurance before her, years dim and grey, unlit by any blissful moments, cold in the bereavement of her love, and her heart sank, as with a sickening weight of lead, within her ; and she broke into wild weeping in her pity for herself.

And Robert held her strongly to him, and cursed his own selfishness, that had put out a hand four years ago, to grasp the heart he could not retain—cursed himself aloud and darkly, that he had won her, to cast her thus away.

"Margie," he said at last, "you make me feel a deeper villain with every tear you shed. I must go forth from you, then, cursed by my own conscience, for *your* life lying broken behind. I shall hate myself in success or failure, because I have left a black shadow on you. Good God! Margie, what have I done! what have I done! Do not weep so, Margie, curse me rather—curse me for my selfishness, and let me go."

Then suddenly, at these words, she remembered *him*, and she forgot herself again. She looked into *his* face, and the bitterness passed out of her weeping, and the vision before her of her own life faded away, and she only saw him, as his life would be, solitary, tempest-tossed, and hardship-worn, upon the rough strong sea of life.

And yet he must go, and go without her. She would be no longer near him in his dark hours to whisper encouragement and hope. Alone henceforth, and often weary, she saw his life stretching before her so forlorn.

He must go ! and with that dark despair upon him, that reckless abandonment of all hope. Oh, if she could give him *her* Rock to take with him ! Oh that she could send him forth in the armour of her God !

“Robert,” she said, “will you take my words with you then, and my prayers, and my assurance that I will wait for you still ? Will you feel that I am with you always, as I shall ever feel as if you were near to me ? Or are you going to rush into life with a reckless desperation, and leave all memory of me behind ?”

“I shall never forget you, Margie. No other woman’s hand shall ever rest in love in mine ; but I cannot ask you to remain betrothed to me. You are free, and if the news reaches me some day that you are married, I will try to find comfort in the thought that you are happy, the wife of some other man more worthy your love.”

“Never, Robert,” she answered, “never !”

“Well, well,” he said. “If you say so really, Margie, let me *still* go forward in hope. I think I have power left in me yet.

You will still be praying for me, and I will strive, so help me God, on the side of an answer to your prayers."

She looked up brightly now, and answered his first sentence.

"Power left in you! Look at that sun, Robert, rising cloudless and clear this summer dawn. Some lives are begun like that. But I have seen it on a wintry morning rising in a bank of clouds, dark and gloomy, and I have thought it hopeless that it could ever shine into a cheerful day. And I have watched, delighted, and seen the sun break out strong and radiant, scatter every cloud in his victory, and shine forth beautiful in his strength. So may your life be, Robert, as the late rising of a winter's day."

The words, eager and poetic, so different from the wonted simplicity of Marjory's speech, seemed to come home to him. He gazed up towards the heavenly horizon, and a grave, reverent look came into his eyes, as if his heart were indeed striving to pray. And then he bent over her, and murmured

blessings on her fair head, and strong resolve rose within his soul.

The bells of St. Giles' rang out again, a merry jubilee mocking their grief, and every spire, from both sides the valley, tolled out the hour. They had sat there long. It was nine o'clock.

"I must go, Margie!" he whispered. But no answer came.

He rose and strained her to his heart in one last embrace. A few broken words, a great heaving of the strong man's breast, some hot tears falling upon her forehead, one effort, and he was gone.

She sat alone where he had left her, a strange dizziness half blinding her eyes as she saw him walk away, away into the bright sunshine; his tall figure disappeared among the trees, and then she sank back again, and she never knew what befell through the next dark bewildered hour.

Then she rose and went home. She found Jim and her mother long finished breakfast, both grave and solicitous, but not wondering at her delay. They said little to

her, and she said nothing to them ; but she went quietly up-stairs presently, and shut herself into her room, and was alone again, —alone with her sorrow and her God.

Then she turned to face her sorrow, and knelt down by her bedside to strive.

She had to teach herself to take it "from the hand of heaven," as her simple, puritanical faith had told her sorrow should be received. And she knelt there long, while the fight raged within, and she struggled with herself, with circumstances, with the voice of repining in her heart, which she told herself was sin.

It was wonderful, the strong power of self-discipline in that slight frame, as she schooled her heart to the submission her creed required.

"Thy will be done"—lesson taught her from her infancy, now at length hers to enact.

She first brought *him*, and laid him again and again at the foot of divine mercy and love. "Where thou goest I will keep thee," she pleaded for him, and brought him back

in spirit yet again; until at last she *felt* him safe there, and her soul rose within her consoled, for she saw him going forth (in the vision of her faith) girt round with strength, sheltered by mystic power.

She saw him counselled and directed. "It is well with him," came the assurance in the still small voice within, and she turned her prayers away from his necessity, whispering to herself still, "It is well."

Then she looked at her own life, to be accepted in submission, without complaint. And she saw the duty-path before her of quiet endurance, of long patience, of cheerfulness for her mother's sake. And she felt it bitter—hard, but she won the battle, and she took unto her frail strength as she knelt there a power that never failed her, and a brightness that shed unfading lustre upon her life.

When these hours were over she came down from her room, and went to her mother, who had been waiting in much sadness, weeping many tears for her Marjory throughout the day.

"Mother," she said very gently; "Robert has gone away."

"My poor child!" began Mrs. Lindsay, with a fresh outburst of sympathetic grief; but Marjory stopped her.

"No, mother," she answered, "do not grieve. It is well with him. He will come back again."

"God give you strength, my poor darling."

"He has given it," said Margie quietly; and then she kissed her mother, and moved away.

And Mrs. Lindsay saw her go about her work again; and days went by, and Margie's cheek did not pale, nor did the smile fade that had been ever the brightness of her home, for she trusted, and waited, and worked.

Mrs. Lindsay made no more efforts to comfort her. She was accustomed to this quiet reserve of her children; it had been their father's way, and they bore their troubles as he had done, brightly, bravely, unflinchingly, but almost in silence.

James looked sternly grave when he met

his sister. He had performed a duty, and was convinced he had been right. He felt for her, but, unaccustomed as he was to receive or need comfort for himself, he felt unable to offer it, and was awkward at the attempt.

"I am sorry, Margie," he said curtly, when they met. She smiled at him very gently, but said nothing. "I am sorry he had to go," he continued.

"He will come again, Jim."

"But you must try and forget him, Marjory," he exclaimed, turning quickly upon her.

Marjory shook her head. "Impossible, Jim."

"But he may not come back for years—perhaps never," he continued, feeling cruelly hard, but telling himself it was his duty.

"Well," she answered, "then I shall be waiting still."

He stamped his foot.

"I am sure," he said, "a well-balanced mind should be able to withdraw its love from an unsatisfactory object."

"Love is not like that, Jamie," she answered him, shaking her head.

"I'm sure I don't know what it *is* like!" he exclaimed.

"I do not think you do, dear," she answered, coming up to him and looking into his face with a smile, "I do not think you do; but who knows, Jamie? perhaps some day you may."

He laughed incredulously, and Margie walked quietly away.

CHAPTER XV.

"SO BRIGHT A GLEAM, SO DEAR A DREAM."

MEANWHILE, as the weeks went on, Jim—practical, stoical, unimpressionable Jim—went every day to Sea Grange to "inquire for Aunt Helen." He appeared in the afternoon, and stayed often for the early dinner, and on into the evening.

He sat by Aunt Helen, and amused her. He talked consols and tea prices with the Colonel at great length; he had a game of cricket now and then with the boys, and he had daily walks, and conversations, and long lingerings in the garden with Trixie.

Jim's coming was a great deal to her. It broke into the dreariness of her waiting heart; it broke into the monotony of her

life; it filled up all suddenly the solitude in the daily current of her mind.

The pain that ached and tore so when she was alone was soothed, and almost forgotten sometimes, while Jim talked to her in his curt way, or while she talked to him, pouring out all her girlish excitable ideas to him, and receiving a full, though undemonstrative, sympathy in return.

They generally quarrelled on all kinds of subjects, abstract and practical. Trixie's views bubbling up, coloured by her own secret, and by the strong influence within; Jim's coming forth clear and untarnished, going straight as an arrow to the points of right and wrong. She poured invectives upon his views, calling them narrow, red-taped, conventional, but he clung to them manfully. She asserted they bored her terribly; but they did not. She was always delighted to see Jim come; and he came and came.

She never meant to flirt with him. The idea seemed inconceivable; indeed, on the contrary, he piqued her sometimes. Such

coolness, such unruffled sustaining of her presence, was quite new to her, in her small experience of her power over her fellow-men.

His eyes never sparkled with that glowing look of admiration she had grown accustomed to meet from every pair of masculine orbs at the Craig; his voice never tuned itself to peculiar and devoted accents, as all these conventional voices had done when they addressed her. In fact, he was not always reminding her, as they had done, that she was a woman, and a pretty one, destined to be professedly adored. He seemed unconscious of it. And yet—and yet—he came continually, and he was wondrously and inexplicably happy.

He never thought, he said to himself, that his holiday could have been so pleasant; that he, after years of hard work, and strong, serious interests, could have found the enjoyment he did in simply rambling among his boyish scenes. He had had no idea that visits to Sea Grange could have been so sweet to him; he had not known

that the old garden was so dear, that the walk along the sea was fraught with associations that made his heart thrill again and again with a sense of keen enjoyment. Nor had he been aware that he was so fond of Aunt Helen. He could not positively pass a day without going to see her.

Margie looked on quietly and observed, really pleased at the hope and prospect she fancied might be opening up for Jim ; but she was discreet, and she said nothing.

As the bright summer weeks sped along, they had many expeditions together ; pleasant rambles to visit old childish haunts, and Saturday picnics, avowedly to amuse the boys.

On one of these they went strawberry-picking to Roslyn. They lunched near the old chapel, and Jim found himself wandering through the woods above the burn afterwards, with Trixie by his side. And then she was tired, and sat down by the pathway, and he threw himself on the grass quite near, and threw back his head and gazed up into the specks of blue sky

glistening through the canopy of green. He listened to the murmuring summer around him, and felt strangely, so strangely happy.

"Oh, Trix," he said at length, "I am not given to wishing, but how I should like at this moment that all this could go on."

"Poor old Jim! I do wish indeed that you had not to go back to that horrid place again."

"Yes," he continued, in a tone most dreamily unlike himself, "I wish it could all go on, summer and sunshine, and green cool shade, and that gurgling water, and you and me——"

She looked down quickly at him. He was not looking at her as he spoke, but away up into the leafy softness and the specks of sky.

"Yes," he continued, "such is human nature; take the harness off us and down we lie, and leave us lying long enough, and sleep creeps over the spirit, and all energy and purpose are gone. I declare I feel as I lie here, Trixie, that I do not care if the

whole fabric of tea-trade and systems of banking were at the bottom of the sea."

"Do you generally care much about them really?"

"Not in the abstract," he answered. "Naturally much caring cannot centre, as I say abstractedly, in the subject of tea *per se*; but I do care to be a man, not a lotus-eater, and to feel, as a man, complete monarchy over the exercise and application of all my faculties and powers. But if I stayed here much longer, I do not think I should go on caring even for that idea."

"Why not, Jim?"

"I am a great deal too happy," he said.

"I did not believe it possible I could have dropped into a *dolce far niente* existence with such ease."

"You will rouse up again," she replied.

"Yes; but I don't like the thought of it. There is the going away, to begin with, then the grinding monotony to be faced, then the expulsion of the abstract and the ideal from all thought and conversation, and the renewed concentration of intellect upon

be tangible and seen. Then there is the terrible home solitude. Oh, Trixie!" he groaned, "duty is duty, and fellows *have* to do it; but, heaven knows, it is sometimes hard."

Trixie's eyes glistened as she looked down upon him. She was sorry for Jim; she would have done a great deal to lighten the grey dreariness of his life; he was very dear to her, though Godfrey was in the innermost recesses of her heart-love,—still in there, a burning, delicious secret: but Jim was very dear to her too.

If it could only have been that Jim had stayed by her, offering her his warm devotion, and Godfrey's influence had remained away, he *might* have got that place which Godfrey had left hollow and aching, and have filled it most happily with a healthful love. Hearts may be caught thus often in the rebound.

If Godfrey would just remain absent, and let his hold upon her slacken and drop;
; for Jim was floating into it all un-
1. First, that intensity of happiness so

inexplicable, so new ; these glows of strange feeling that thrilled him as he walked home, night after night, to Castle Street, and made the distance seem as nothing ; the halo of beautiful tenderness that came gradually over everything in his eyes, softening his voice, lighting up his glance, endearing to him everything in his way.

And so it went on, till his leave was nearly over, and his walks to and fro from Edinburgh were near their close. Then fresh thoughts came to him, and more than he had ever done before he began to meditate on the circumstances and trials of his own exiled life ; so lonely, so shut out from softening influence, so hardened by routine, business filling up thought, aims, and efforts, and eating with dull influence into his very soul—cankering round it, he realised, and banishing all poetry, idealism, and tenderness from his heart.

And he was going back to it, to his lonely home, his solitary evenings, his individual and work-encrusted life. He shrank from it.

And one night, as he strode home in the

dominant another picture crept over him. A happy smile suddenly lit up his face.

He saw his foreign home before him in a new and such a beautiful light. A town suddenly lived for him in the midst of its stirring through the cool matted rooms, sitting on his verandah, being a centre-point of order beauty for all.

It rushed upon him so clearly, the change that might have come over everything; the happiness that had endeared the old scenes about Sea Grange, suddenly transferred itself in a flood of rich colouring to his tropical home, and he realised—with keen thrills of pleasure—that he had *found* the heart that he wished to make his own.

The thought had become clear to him one bright as he walked rapidly along that long straight tract of road, leading into Edinburgh from the toll-bar to the Dean Bridge, and as he reached the bridge it seemed too much for him, he stopped and leaned upon

He gazed over into the ravine
could always remember how
noonbeams on the water, far

beneath him, and on the banks of the Doone Terrace Gardens, a little distant in the view.

He looked down, unconscious of all now, his heart beating with excitement, at its recognition of itself; and then he bared his head, and looked reverently upwards into the dark sky, whence the stars shone upon him glittering in responsive joy, and in the glow of his full-heartedness he poured his thanks to God for her sweetness, her beauty, and her infinite dearness to himself. He called down God's blessing upon her, prayed for strength to protect her, and for constant tenderness towards her, if he took her thus, in all earnestness,—for ever.

As he thought of her, so bright and frank with him, so fresh and childlike, so fair, with all her pretty ways, the memory seemed to touch him strangely, and he felt inclined to cry over his joy and love like a girl; but he told himself "not to be an idiot," and then he walked more soberly on.

He got home, and was creeping quietly up-stairs (for he had loitered on the way and it was late), but he stopped on the first

landing, for the light still burnt in the drawing-room, and he turned in to find Margie there.

She was reading, and looked up as he entered, and immediately she caught the bright light on his face.

"Jamie!" she exclaimed, and she rose hastily, and threw the book aside. Jim came forward to her.

He took her outstretched hand for a moment in his, with a caressing gesture very rare between them, and he looked into her face.

"Margie, Margie," he said gently, an expression of softness, extraordinary for him, coming into his eyes, "how *hard* it must have been for you to let Robert go!"

She understood him perfectly, and smiled.

"It had to be, Jim—hard things have to be sometimes. But I can wait."

He sat down by her.

"If I could only hear something good of him," she continued. "In his last letter he had still nothing to tell."

"Nothing?" assented Jim dreamily.

"No—he says so little, that I feel he can have little good to say ; but God is kind, Jamie, we must just be content to wait."

"Wait—wait," repeated Jim, still strangely dreamy and absent ; "it would be very hard to wait."

Margie looked at him, with a soft amused expression in her eyes.

"Jamie, you are very bright to-night," she said ; "what has happened to you ?"

"I am wonderfully happy," he replied.

"Well, dear ?" she continued.

"It is nothing, Margie," he went on ; "I have really nothing, after all, to be happy about—not yet," he added. "I have only been enjoying my own thoughts."

"Indeed !" she answered.

"Yes—I have been thinking," he continued, "only about Trixie."

"Dear little Trixie !" said Margie.

"Yes," he went on, "Margie, I should not mind going away again, if *that* might be. You know what I mean ?"

"Yes, dear. And have you asked her, Jim ?"

He shook his head.

"I am only so happy, Margie," he replied laughing, "because I have realised that I am going to ask her, and it has been like the sudden opening up of heaven's door to me—rather, the recognition of what my heaven, all these weeks, has really been—and when I think of her, I cannot help being happy. When I remember her looks and her tones, and when I go over all these days in my memory that we have been together, I cannot help feeling more than happy, Margie, for I do not think she will refuse to go to India with me. Do you think so?" he asked, smiling into his sister's face again.

"I hope not, Jamie; but one woman can never answer for another woman's heart."

"I have no rival," he continued; "I have seen, with different fellows my uncle has brought there, that I have no rival. I cannot help knowing that she prefers none among them to me. I *think* Trixie is fond of me, Margie," he said.

"I think she is, dear," replied his sister.
"Will you ask her to-morrow, Jim?"

He became grave for a moment, and considered.

"I do not think I ought yet," he replied.
"You know I expect a month's prolongation of leave by telegraph immediately, and that will give me time. I must write out at once, Margie, about it. There was a place vacant just as I came home, in our office, and I knew I could have it by applying; but not contemplating this sort of thing, I did not care about it, knowing it was a niche for a married man. I may still get it, and it will make all the difference between possibility and impossibility to me just now."

"But would you not speak to Trixie, and then wait?" said his sister.

Jim paused, and the look of self-discipline came over his face again cool and calm, the look of unusual excitement passing momentarily away.

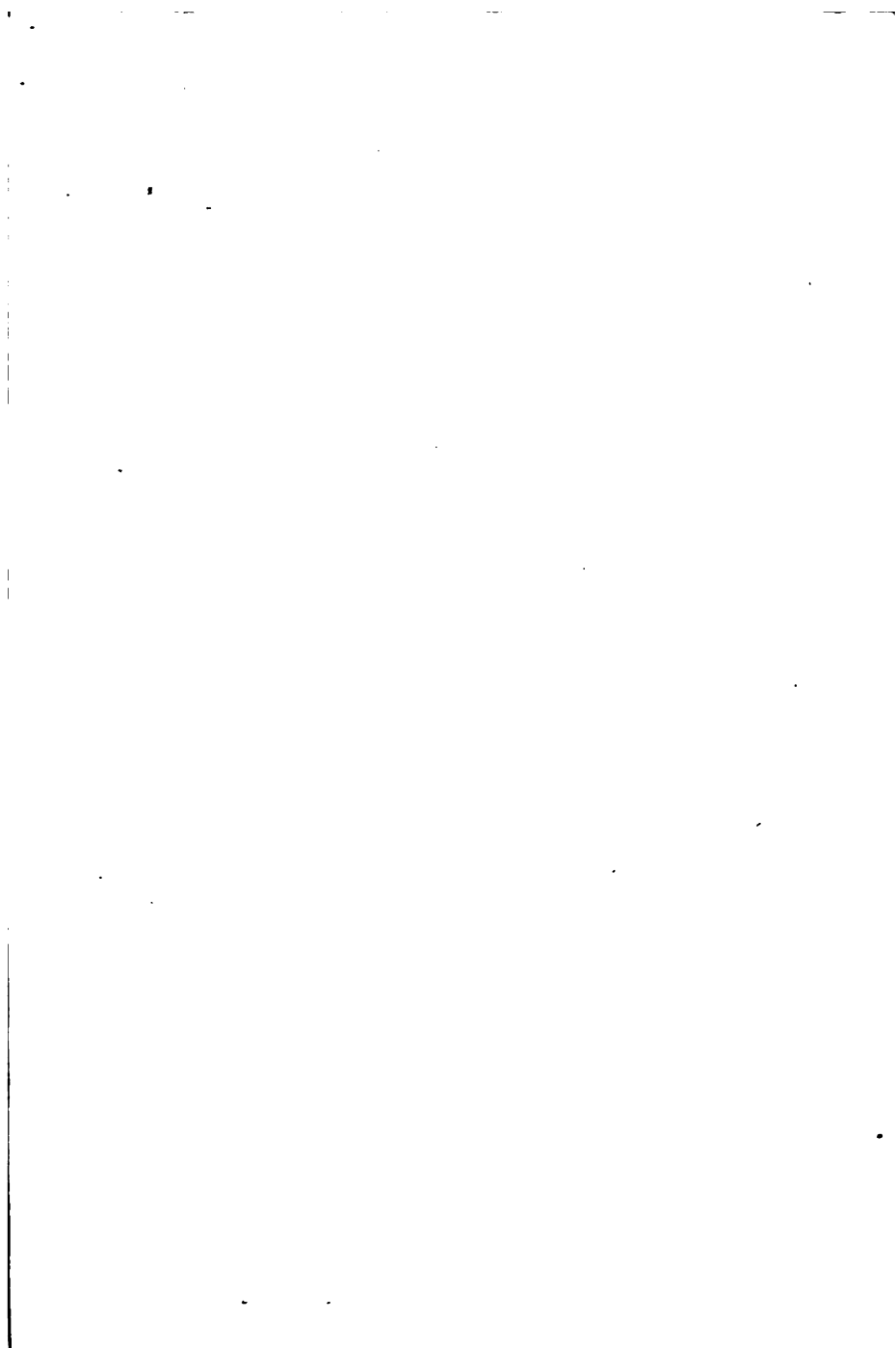
"No, Margie, that is not my doctrine; I will not ask her until I have a home to offer.

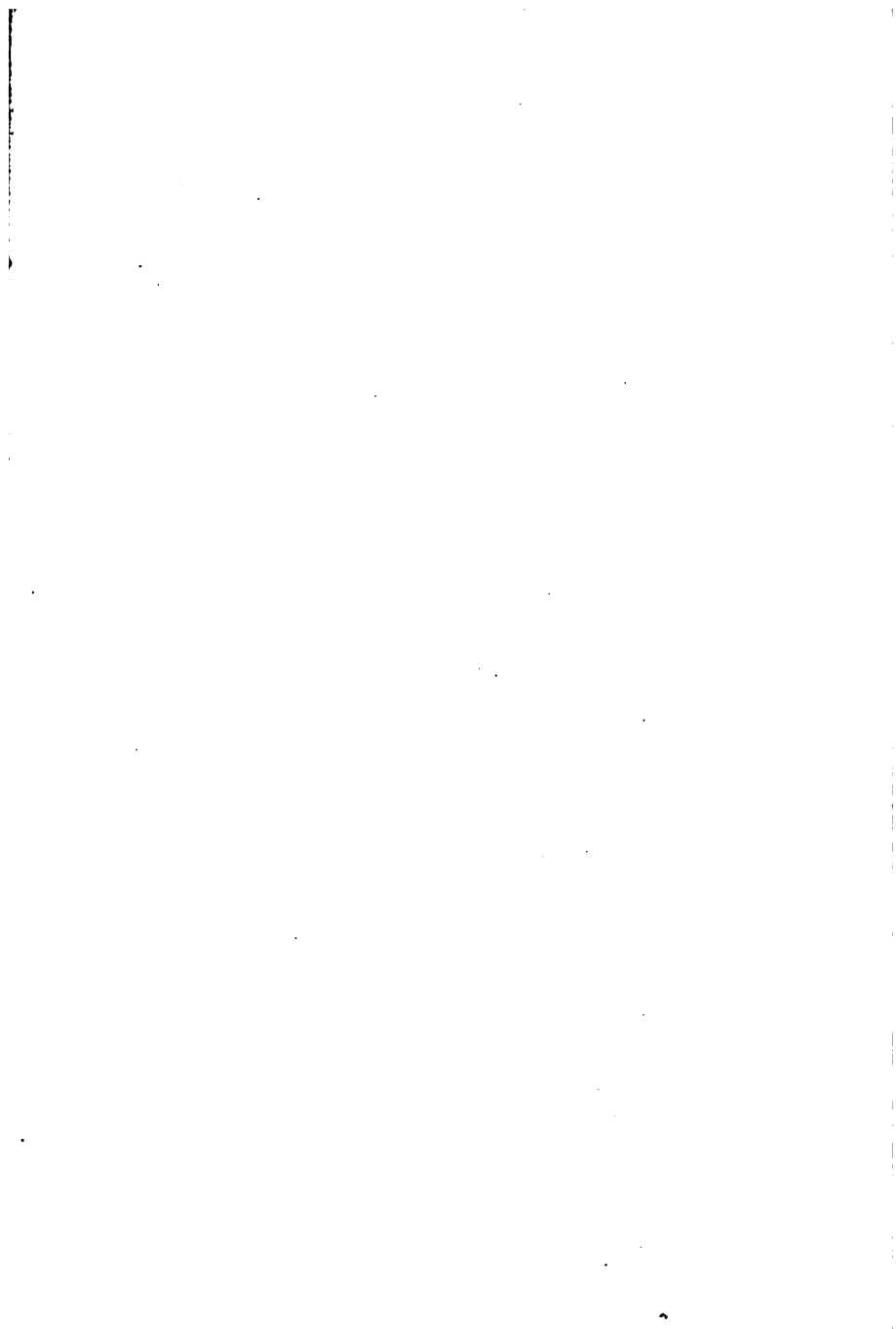
An independent home, too ; indebted to no human being, but to *her* for herself, and her love," said Jim proudly. "That is all I will ask from Trixie, and I think by return of telegram, I shall be able to give her all *she* will require."

And then he lighted up again, joy and tenderness mingling in soft brilliancy upon his usually grave face.

"Dear Jim," thought Marjory, looking tearfully at him, "how well he deserves to be happy !"

END OF VOL. I.







the 1990s, the incidence of *S. flexneri* has increased in the United Kingdom [10]. In the United States, *S. flexneri* has been reported as the most common serotype in children with acute bacterial dysentery [11]. In the United Kingdom, *S. flexneri* has been reported as the most common serotype in children with acute bacterial dysentery [12].

There is a paucity of data on the epidemiology of *S. flexneri* in the United Kingdom. In the 1980s, *S. flexneri* was reported as the most common serotype in children with acute bacterial dysentery in the United Kingdom [12]. In the 1990s, *S. flexneri* was reported as the most common serotype in children with acute bacterial dysentery in the United Kingdom [13]. In the 2000s, *S. flexneri* was reported as the most common serotype in children with acute bacterial dysentery in the United Kingdom [14].

The aim of this study was to determine the prevalence of *S. flexneri* in children with acute bacterial dysentery in the United Kingdom. The study was conducted in the United Kingdom, where *S. flexneri* is the most common serotype in children with acute bacterial dysentery [12, 13, 14].

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